

11/16/25

Intro To Second Thessalonians

We begin our in-depth study of Second Thessalonian with an introduction to the book to understand the content and unity of entire letter before examining its parts through the verse by verse exposition.

We have seen the First letter to the Thessalonians as an incredible encouragement to the church, revealing what it can be if each person is in love with Jesus and catches the vision of the church.

Having been evangelized by the apostle Paul and his companions, the people turned from their idols to the living and true God to wait for His Son from heaven to be delivered from the wrath to come, shocking those around them by their lives and proclamation.

* Remembering that it was an infant church established in merely three weeks. Acts 17:2

These Thessalonians were held up as an example to the world for their witness, as we have seen in the first letter, even though Paul's visit was brief.

1. They were examples by their joy in the midst of sufferings, preaching the gospel to all. 1Thess. 1:6-8

* Again the church has been used as the model church for its zeal and maturity, opposed to mediocrity, but certainly not perfect!

2. Not only in their Christian living, but Paul used them as the epitome of giving, despite of great trials of affliction and deep poverty. 2Cor. 8:1-6

3. As we mentioned many of them became Paul's traveling partners.

a. Aristarchus. Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2

b. Secundus. Acts 20:4

c. Demas possibly. 2Tim. 4:10

4. Don't forget that the central theme of First Thessalonians is the **Coming of Jesus for His saints** in the air, affirmed in every chapter.

I. The city of Thessalonica.

A. The location of the city.

1. The city was a large and a very prosperous sea-port, situated on the northmost point of the Thermaic Gulf, a short distance from the mouth of the Axios River, modern day Turkey.

a. Thessalonica was 100 miles from Philippi and 50 miles from Athens.

b. It was famous for its harbor in the Gulf of Therma, being the largest and most prosperous.

c. It was the most important city of the Roman province of Macedonia in the days of Paul.

d. It had been one of the chief cities of Macedonia from Hellenistic times.

- e. Xerxes the Persian had a naval base there when he invaded Europe.
- 2. The religions of the city were one with the culture and life of the city.
 - a. Dionusus, Sarapis, and Cabirus were some of their gods.
 - b. The cult of Cabirus was a martyred hero and on occasion returned to life to aid his followers, being worshipped by confessing sins and baptismal rites, immersed symbolically in the blood of the martyred god.
 - c. Cabirus worship had the approval of the social elite, the wealthiest member of society responsible for the running the city and being united to the cult that identified all citizens. (Wannamaker:12)
 - d. The imperial cult of Caesar existed as early as 29-28 B.C. , evident by the coins of Caesar designated as god and on the reverse a head of Augustus appeared with the cities legend.
 - e. So any attack on the cult was an attack on the community and a threat to the Roman imperial power, dangerous with potential loss of life.
 - f. On the western horizon the height of Mount Olympus could be seen, the fabled home of the Greek gods.

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 naming 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 its seat of commerce.
 - a. This again was due to the location of the city, having the best natural harbor in the Aegean Sea and through its port it became wealthy, being the chief port city of Macedonia, its fertile soil, forests and mineral deposits.
 - b. The city’s importance was also in its geographical setting, straddling the Via Egnatia, the great Roman road, stretching to Asia Minor and the East.
 - c. Therefore trade poured in from both sides, enhancing its 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 its final struggles of the Roman Republic, in 42 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, being excluded from military occupation, they could hold assembly, appoint its own magistrate, had certain tax concessions and minted its own coins.
 - 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 had a population of 200,000, for the most part native Greeks.
2. There were some Romans and Orientals.
4. A large Jewish colony was present due to its attractive commerce.
5. Some Gentile had become dissatisfied with their pagan religions became God-fearers, attending the synagogue.
6. According to the 2021 census the population of Thessalonica in the metropolitan area was 1,006,112, Athens has 3.6 million.

This was the city of Thessalonica!

II. The church at Thessalonica.

- A. The apostle Paul wanted to see how the brethren were doing, as the result of the first missionary journey, this led to the second missionary journey, which established the church of Thessalonica. Acts 15:36
 1. A strong contention between Paul and Barnabas caused them to divide up and Paul took Silas and Barnabas took John Mark. Acts 15:39-40
 2. Paul went to Derbe and Lystra, he took Timothy as a disciple and 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 16:6-8
4. Paul receives a vision of a man from Macedonia to come and help. Acts 16:9
5. Paul immediately went with Silas and Timothy and Luke joined them, indicated by the word “we”. Acts 16:10-16
6. They left Troas, went through some cities and arrive at Philippi where Paul met Lydia, introducing the gospel to Europe.
7. Lydia accepted the Lord, a demon possessed girl was delivered by Paul and he and Silas were imprisoned and beaten. Acts 16:14-34
8. Paul and Silas left Philippi along the Ignatian Way traveling 100 miles and arrived at Thessalonica, being the second city to receive the gospel in Macedonia.
* Paul knowing the importance and size of the city 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 to place Christ along-side and reveal Him as Messiah.

2. The response to Paul’s preaching is recorded: Acts 17:4-15
 - 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 be one of the 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
* This is confirmed in the letter. 1Thess. 2:14-16
 - 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
* At that time Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome. 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 went to stir up the people. Acts 17:13-15
 * Paul requested Silas and Timothy be told to join him. at Athens. vs. 15

C. The duration of the stay at Thessalonica.

1. The Scriptures tell us that Paul was there for three weeks. Acts 17:2
 * Paul, as his custom was went to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.”
2. There are some objections to the brief time, but Luke is very clear in the book of Acts about the time of their stay.
 - a. That Paul and the others worked with their own hands. 1Thess. 2:9
 - b. That Paul left a thriving church.
 - c. That the number of Gentiles seems to be too large for a short time.
 - d. That Paul had received two gifts from Philippi. Phil. 4:15-16

This was the church at Thessalonica!

III. The occasion and purpose of Second Thessalonians.

- A. The apostle Paul wrote to comfort and exhort them in their increasing persecutors. 2Thess. 1:3-12
 * Remember this was Paul main concern about them in his First letter, due to their having to flee suddenly, leaving them as orphans.
 1. Their faith was growing exceedingly and love abounding towards each other. vs. 3
 2. Paul boasted to all the church of their patience and faith in persecution and trial. vs. 4
 3. God would repay the evil doers troubling them, they were to rest for Jesus would be revealed from heaven with His angels to punish the gospel haters. vs. 5-8
 4. Jesus would be glorified in His saints in that Day and admired by all gospel believers. vs. 9-12
- B. The apostle Paul wrote to correct the false teaching by someone that they were already in the Great Tribulation. 2Thess. 2:1-8
 * Again Paul had written to them regarding their dead love-ones that were with Christ and that they would meet them in the air at the rapture and “The Day of The Lord” and how it would not involve them because they were sons of the light and day and should be watching, for the Kingdom is present and yet to come!

1. Paul declared the gathering of the saint had not taken place, the church was still present on the earth. vs. 1-2
 - a. He indicated this had to take place first. vs. 1
 - b. He told them not to be shaken in mind or troubled. vs. 2a
 - c. He indicated the various forms the teaching could of come to them, by spirit, by word or by letter. vs. 2b
 - d. He told them the teaching that the day of Christ had come was not from them. vs. 2c-d
2. Paul gave very specific information for the tribulation to be present. vs. 3-8
 - a. He declared that “The Day of The Lord” cannot come or be present without two things occurring. vs. 3
 - 1) An Apostasy from the faith.
 - 2) The man of sin to be present.
 - b. He declared the Man of sin would demand worship as God and sit in the temple as God. vs. 4
 - c. He declared he had told them about this when he had been with them. vs. 5
 - d. He declared that they knew what was restraining the appearance of the man of sin, the lawless one, the presence of the church on earth. vs. 6-7
 - e. He declared then and only then the man of sin would be revealed on the earth,

who Jesus would destroy with the brightness of His Coming. vs. 8

* The increased persecution and false rumors caused them to disregard the truth of God’s word they knew!

- f. He declared the coming of the man of sin was from Satan with every ability to deceive because they rejected the gospel to be saved, being condemned by God. vs. 9-12

* Verses one through twelve is the heart of the letter and the key section for the end times, illuminating and supplementing the other end time passages about the Antichrist. Dan. 9:24-27; Ezk. 38-39; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 11:1-6

C. The apostle Paul also wrote to bring order to the disorderly conduct of some believers, who perhaps were thinking the Lord’s return was so soon, they had become increasingly irresponsible in their walk. 2Thess. 3:6-11

* Paul remember exhorted them in his first letter on various issues, to honor the leadership, to both reproof and comfort all with patience, to not be vengeful but do good and a series of short commands.

1. In their disobedient to the word. vs. 6
2. In their desisting from work and consequently living off others. vs. 7-10

3. In their darting about as busybodies in the business of others. vs. 11
4. In their provisions for themselves and cease meddling in others affairs. vs. 12
5. In not becoming tired in doing good, when needed. vs. 13
6. In cutting some from fellowship that they might repent, seeing them a brethren, not enemies. vs. 14-15

This was the occasion and purpose of the second epistle to Thessalonica!

IV. The date and authenticity of Second Thessalonians.

A. The date of Second Thessalonians.

1. The date of the first letter is believed to have been between 51-53 A.D.
 - a. Remember Gallio took office in spring of 51-52 A.D.
 - 1) Some insist on July of 51 A.D.
 - 2) There are others who say 52 A.D.
 - 3) Either 51 or 52 A.D. would be acceptable for First Thessalonians.
 - b. Paul was accused and brought before Gallio at Corinth, he is mentioned by name. Act 18:12
 - 1) Possibly the unreasonable and wicked men were the Jews at Corinth. 2Thess. 3:2

- 2) Paul had come to Corinth in weakness and fear and was afraid, so much so that the Lord appeared to him and told him not to fear, for He had many souls in that city, and he remained for one year and six months. 1Cor. 2:2-3; 18:9-11

c. Therefore without doubt this Second epistle was also written from Corinth, most scholars agree.

- 1) Three to six months after the first letter.
- 2) The time marked their separation and news from Timothy.
- 3) Both epistles are believed the earliest of Paul's letters, perhaps Galatians, but no other.
- 4) The epistles was written about twenty years after the resurrection, yet it's power was still transforming sinners!
* It was the same gospel.

B. The internal evidence for the authenticity of Second Thessalonians is abundant.

1. The names of Paul, Silas and Timothy appear. 2Thess. 1:1; 1Thess. 1:1
2. The admiration and boasting of Paul in their sufferings, as well as God's righteous judgments over the wicked. 2Thess. 1:3-4; 1Thess. 1:2-10; 2:13-14

3. The related issue about the gathering “parousia” of the saints that Paul had told them in the three weeks at Thessalonica and the first epistle the, in relation to the Day of the Lord. 2Thess. 2:1-6; 1Thess. 4:15-17
 4. The apostle Paul asked for prayer. 2Thess. 3:1; 1Thess. 5:25
 5. Many of the similar internal problems and situations are addressed. 2Thess. 3:6-15; 1Thess. 5:12-14
 6. Paul’s witness of authorship. 2Thess. 3:17
 - a The resemblance of content, style and vocabulary is unmistakably Pauline.
 - b. Scroggie declared, “More than any other of Paul’s letters, it is characterized by simplicity, gentleness and affection”.
- C. The external evidence for the authenticity of Second Thessalonians is equally abundant.
1. Second Thessalonians is stronger in evidence in quotation by the church fathers than First Thessalonians.
 2. Marcion the heretic accepted it as authentic.
 3. The Muratorian fragments list it, middle 2nd Century.
 4. Polycarp the disciple of John attested to both 1-2 Thessalonians. (69-155 A.D. as well as Ignatius 107 A. D. and Justin Martyr 100-165 A. D.
 5. Ireneus in his works Against Heresies (V. vi. 1) he not only quotes 1Thess. 5:23, but also

- clearly assigns it to Paul and quotes other passages from both 1-2 Thessalonians. (2nd Century A.D.)
6. Clement of Alexandria, a contemporary of Ireneus, in the second century (199-200 A. D.) was well acquainted with 1-2 Thessalonians and quoted extensively from 2Thess. 1:6-8, 6-10; 2:4, 8, 11.
 7. Tertullian quoted in the second century writing Against Marcion, mentions Paul’s writings and quotes from 1-2 Thessalonians, especially 2Thessalonians 2.
 8. Origin refers to quotes again and again from 1-2Thessalonians and definitely ascribed them to Paul. (210-250 A. D.)
 9. Eusebius writing at the beginning of the 4th century acknowledge Paul writing 14 epistles, including Hebrews, and had never heard anyone who doubted the authenticity of 1-2 Thessalonians.
 10. The letter is contained in most ancient versions, the Syriac in the east and the old Latin or W. Africa.
 11. The Second letter is recognized in every test of New Testament books
 12. No one questioned its authority, until modern times.
- D. The objections against the authenticity of Second Thessalonians.

1. The first attack was in 1798-1804 by J.E.C. Schmidt later in 1839 by Karn, popularized by Baur and a full scale attack came in 1903 by Wrede. In 1922 E. Best influenced a majority to doubt the authenticity of Second Thessalonians.
 - a. They declare Paul corrected the imminent “parousia” to a delayed coming.
 - b. They say the two epistles are written to two different groups, a divided church of Jew and one of Gentile, but no internal evidence proves that.
 - c. There is the theory that Second Thessalonians was written first and First Thessalonians was written second, a reverse order.
2. There is the argument based on doctrinal content and literary relationship between 1-2 Thessalonians.
 - a. 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
 - b. Yet Jesus spoke about the “man of sin” and the “apostasy”. Lk. 18:8; Matt. 24:15
 - c. Paul’s explanation in First Thessalonians is regarding the return of Christ “for His church”, while Second Thessalonians is Christ’s “returning with His church”.

- d. The commentator Scroggie put it this way, “The first of these is for the comfort and encouragement of the saints, and the second tells of coming judgment over the foes of Christ; the first relates to the Church, and the second, to the world: the first speaks of the Parousia (iv. 15) and the Second, of the Apocalupsis (1.7): the first reveals that Christ will come to the air, and the second, that He will come to the earth: the first points to “the Day of Christ” (cf. Phil i. 10) and the second to “the Day of the Lord”. 2Thess. 2:2
 * He said, “Failure to distinguish these viewpoints will result in much confusion.”
3. There is the arguments based on the contrast between First and Second Thessalonians.
 - a. Declaring that that First Thessalonians is warm and friendly, while Second Thessalonians is said to be serious, cold and formal.
 - b. This is so subjective that on this basis, one would have to reject much of what Jesus said!

This is the date and authenticity of Second Thessalonians!

V. The particulars of Second Thessalonians.

- A. The Second epistle to the Thessalonians is the second of two letters written and sent by Paul.
1. The Second letter to the Thessalonians contains only three chapters.
 - a. It contains 47 verses, the first has 89 verses.
 - b. It is full of spiritual truth and doctrine, as we will see.
 - c. The first chapter alone is a good example the righteous justice of God.
 2. The dominate theme of the Second letter is the Second coming of Jesus **with his church to the earth for judgment**, after the seven years of Tribulation.
 - a. The central and dominant theme is the carried over from the First epistle focusing on Jesus coming for His church, in the rapture, prior to the seven year of the Tribulation, at the end of each chapter! 1Thess. 1:10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:17-18; 5:23
 - b. Jesus will return with His bride and the mighty angels to take vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel. 2Thess. 1:7-8
 - c. Jesus first comes for His church, then returns with His church. 2Thess. 2:1
 - d. Jesus will destroy the Antichrist at His Second Coming. 2Thess. 2:8

- B. The key words, phrase and verses of Second Thessalonians.
1. The key words.
 - a. Vengeance. 2Thess. 1:8a
 - b. Punishment. 2Thess. 1:9a
 - c. Consume, destroy. 2Thess. 2:8
 - d. Deception. 2Thess. 2:10a
 - e. Condemned. 2Thess. 2:12
 2. The key phrases.
 - a. The righteous judgment of God. 2Thess. 1:5a
 - b. Everlasting destruction. 2Thess. 9a
 - c. That day. 2Thess. 1:10b
 - d. The coming of the Lord and our gathering together. 2Thess. 2:1c
 - e. The falling away, the Son of Perdition. 2Thess. 2:3b, d
 - f. Exposes and exalts himself, Sits as God in the temple of God. 2Thess. 2:4a-b
 - g. Working of Satan. 2Thess. 2:9a
 - h. Unrighteous deception, those who perish. 2Thess. 2:10a
 - i. Strong delusion. 2Thess. 2:11a
 3. The key verses.
 - a. 2Thess. 1:9-10
 - b. 2Thess. 2:1-12, 15, This is the heart of the epistle.
 - c. 2Thess. 3:3, 6, 14
 4. The similar phrases found in First and Second Thessalonians.
 - a. Our Gospel. 1Thess. 1:5; 2Thess. 2:14

- b. We might not be. 1Thess. 2:9; 2Thess. 3:8
- c. Labor and toil. 1Thess. 2:9; 2Thess. 3:8
- d. Finally then, brethren. 1Thess. 4:1; 2Thess. 3:1
- e. So then. 1Thess. 5:6; 2Thess. 2:15

C. The simple outline of Second Thessalonians.

- I. The personal: The consolation in persecution in view of the revelation of Christ. 2Thess. 1
- II. The doctrinal: The correction about the Great Tribulation in view of the rebellion of the Antichrist. 2Thess. 2
- III. The practical: The transformation by insight and instructions for life. 2Thess. 3

D. The place of Second Thessalonians in the epistles.

- 1. First and Second Thessalonians are Eschatological, dealing with the Coming of Christ.
 - a. This “hope” looks on to the consummation and is brightened.
 - b. Now abides faith, hope and love, these three! **Baxter**
- 2. Galatians, First-Second Corinthians and Romans are Soteriological, dealing with salvation through the cross of Christ.

- * These “faith” looks back to the cross and is strengthened.
- 3. Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians are Christological, dealing with the character of Christ.
 - * He is the pre-eminent head of the church sufficient for all things.
- 4. First Timothy, Titus, Second Timothy are called Ecclesiological, dealing with the church of Christ.
 - * He is the enabler and director “love” looks up to the heavenly Bridegroom and is deepened.
- 5. In First Thessalonians, we have Christ coming for His saints to meet Him in the air. 1Thess. 4:18-17
- 6. In Second Thessalonians, we have Christ returning with His saints to the earth. 2Thess. 1:10

These are the particulars of the epistle of First Thessalonians!

VI. The outline.

- I. The personal consolation in view of the future coming judgment over the wicked who persecute the saints of Jesus. 2Thess. 1:1-12
 - A. The common greeting and salutation. 2Thess. 1:1-2

1. The identity of the author and companions. vs. 1:1a-c
 2. The identity of the audience. vs. 1d
 3. The indicated blessing. vs. 2
- B.** The comfort in their persecution. 2Thess. 1:3-4
1. The apostle's thanksgiving for the Thessalonians. vs. 3
 2. The apostle's commending of the Thessalonians. vs. 4
- C.** The condemnation of the wicked. 2Thess. 1:5-10
1. The justification of the justice of God. vs. 5
 2. The revelation of the wrath of God. vs. 7-8
 3. The execution of their retribution. vs. 9-10
- D.** The consecration of the saint. 2Thess. 1:11-12
1. The prayer for the saints. vs. 11
 2. The concern by the intercession. vs. 12
- II.** The doctrinal correction in view of the present deception over the gathering of the saints to Jesus. 2Thess. 2:1-17

- A.** The false teaching about "the man of sin". 2Thess. 2:1-12
1. Comfort over the false teaching. 2Thess. 2:1-2
 2. Commentary on the "man of sin". 2Thess. 2:3-4
 3. Call to remembrance to information they possessed. 2Thess. 2:5-7
 4. Corrupt work of the "man of sin". 2Thess. 2:8-10
 5. Consequences of rejecting the love of the truth. 2Thess. 2:11-12
- B.** The true teaching about the saint of God. 2Thess. 2:13-17
1. Chosen to salvation. 2Thess. 2:13-14
 2. Commitment and comfort. 2Thess. 2:15-17
- III.** The practical instruction in view of ongoing transformation of the saints of Jesus. 2Thess. 3:1-15
- A.** The prayer requested and offered. 2Thess. 3:1-5
1. The request for persona prayer. vs. 1
 2. The confidence in God for the saints. vs. 3-5
- B.** The practical advise for disorderly saints. 2Thess. 3:6-12

1. The believer is to dis-fellowship from those not obeying the word of God. vs. 6
2. The believer had the example of the apostles. vs. 7-9

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

1. The warning is against being calloused, “But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.” vs. 13
2. The advice is to be discrete and loving. vs. 14
3. The caution, “Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.” vs. 15

VI. The conclusion. 2Thess. 3:16-18

A. The closing prayer. 2Thess. 3:16

1. The blessing, “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.” vs. 16a
2. The comfort, “The Lord *be* with you all.” vs. 16b

B. The closing salutation. vs. 17

1. The signature of Paul, “The salutation of Paul with my own hand.” vs. 17a
2. The mark of genuineness, “which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.” vs. 17b

C. The closing benediction. 2Thess. 3:18

1. The source of all salvation, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.” vs. 18a
2. The affirmation, “Amen.” vs. 18b

This is the detailed outline to Second Thessalonians!