

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

Slide 1 – Title Slide

Slide 2

I. WRITER: Paul the apostle

II. AUDIENCE: Church at Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians 1:1)

Map

III. DATE: 50 A.D.

IV. NOTES:

Paul continued to be deeply concerned about the Thessalonian church after he sent the first Epistle. His ministry was one of continual discipling those he had won to Christ. This second letter was written only slightly later than 1 Thessalonians. While he was still in Corinth, Paul received further word about this church's condition. We are not told how he got the information, but Paul felt it was important enough to write 2 Thessalonians. Three main developments prompted Paul to write Second Thessalonians.

1. Persecution of the Christians had grown worse and was leaving the saints at the point of despair.
2. The Thessalonian believers apparently were exposed to some false teaching, thinking that the tribulation period had started already. Paul wrote this second, shorter epistle to the Thessalonians to correct that error by pointing out that certain identifiable events will precede the final day of the Lord, and to encourage the Thessalonians, whose faith was being tested by persecution.
3. The nearness of Christ's return had been misused as a basis to stop working and avoiding job responsibilities even more than at the time of 1 Thessalonians. This problem had apparently become quite severe, based on how Paul addresses it. Or maybe it was just plain laziness.

Slide 4 (Slide 3 is hidden map)

Outline of 2 Thessalonians

Introduction (1:1–2)

I. Paul's Word of Admiration (1:3–12)

- A. A word of undiluted praise (1:3–4)
- B. A word of undisputed promise (1:5–10)
- C. A word of undefeated prayer (1:11–12)

II. Paul's Word of Admonition (2:1–3:15)

- A. The greatness of the coming lie 2:1–12)
- B. The greatness of the Christian life (2:13–3:15)
 1. The believer is chosen (2:13–14)
 2. The believer is challenged (2:15–3:5)
 3. The believer is charged (3:6–15)

Conclusion (3:16–18)

Slide 5

Introduction (1:1-2)

1:1-2 - ¹Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ²Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As in 1 Thessalonians, all three, Paul, Silas, and Timothy co-authored this epistle. Grace before peace.

I. Paul's word of admiration (1:3-12)

A. A word of undiluted praise (1:3-4)

1:3 - ³We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

Once again, Paul begins with giving God thanks for them. Paul's greatest joy seems to come from his converts showing these two things: their "faith groweth exceedingly", and "the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;".

1:4 - ⁴So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

He "gloried" or boasted to others of their patience and faith in their persecutions and tribulations that they endured.

B. A word of undisputed promise (1:5-10)

1:5 - ⁵Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

He calls their persecution a "manifest token" meaning proof or evidence. What did Paul mean by that? That their persecution was proof or evidence "of the righteous judgment of God? There are two ways to look at it.

1. That their sufferings that God allowed them to go through was proof (manifest token) that they were called into the kingdom of God. Paul taught his converts that trials are a part of this life. At the end of his first missionary journey when he visited the churches on the way back home:

Slide 6

Acts 14:22 - Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Christ also made it clear that we are blessed when we suffer persecution for being His and doing His will: (Advance to next slide)

Matthew 5:10-12 - Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Peter wrote that we shouldn't be surprised by trials, specifically persecution:

1 Peter 4:12-14 - Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

2. The way their persecution was proof or evidence "of the righteous judgment of God" is that the sufferings of the saved are proof (manifest token) that there will be a future judgment in which the wicked will be punished.

Suffering tribulation and persecution was taken for granted in the NT. It was expected and is to be a cause for rejoicing. Yet, how often do we complain when a trial or persecution comes our way?

1:6-10 - ⁶Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; ⁷And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; ¹⁰When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Those who bring the persecution will one day have terrible wrath to face, if they don't get saved. Those who remain on the earth after the rapture will face the wrath of God during the tribulation period.

Revelation 14:9-11 - And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. ¹² Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Slide 7

C. A word of undefeated prayer (1:11-12)

1:11,12 - ¹¹Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power: ¹²That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul prayed that they would live a life that glorified Christ... and so should we.

II. Paul's word of admonition (2:1 – 3:15)

A. The greatness of the coming lie (2:1-12)

2:1-5 - ¹Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, ²That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition* (the antichrist); ⁴Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (that's the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel). ⁵Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Somehow, they came to believe that they were in the tribulation period, whether that was from false teaching or from the severe persecution they were under. Paul states that the bodily return of Christ will not be until the falling away that is led by the Antichrist, the "son of perdition". The "anti-Christ" will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God and will even go so far as to sit in the temple at Jerusalem and claim to be God! This was first prophesied of back in Daniel 9.

We studied this in-depth back in Major Prophets 2 when we studied the book of Daniel. So, this is only a summary. Daniel described that for the Jews, 70 weeks were determined for them. Each week was a 7-year period of time for a total time of 490 years. From the time that the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem to the appearance of the Messiah would be 69 weeks or 483 years. That left one week, one 7-year period of time remaining. Daniel's 70th week is the 7-year tribulation period that starts with the Rapture.

Slide 8

Daniel 9:26,27 - And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off (Jesus' death), but not for himself: and the people (Romans) of the prince that shall come (antichrist) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (fulfilled 70 AD); and the end thereof *shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.* (Now we jump forward in time to the last week, the 7 year tribulation period)²⁷And he (anti-Christ) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (7-year period): and in the midst of the week (at the 3 ½ year point) he shall cause the sacrifice (in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem) and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.****

This is the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel that Christ refers to in Matthew 24. And I believe this is when the antichrist declares himself as God, as Paul writes, "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God".

Read vv. 6-9

2:6-9 - ⁶And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. ⁷For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. ⁸And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹*Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

The presence of the Holy Ghost within the saints on earth "withholdeth" and prevents the antichrist's appearance as the beast. He may very well be alive on earth at this time, but not able to appear as the beast yet. Once the Holy Ghost is removed as the saints are raptured off the earth, then the "antichrist" will be revealed.

The anti-Christ will then set up a treaty with Israel at the start of the 7-year tribulation period but will break that treaty at the midpoint and the last 3 and ½ years will be the "Great Tribulation". He will greatly persecute the Jews and those saints who get saved after the rapture. Then Christ returns:

Revelation 19:11,14-16 - And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Revelation 19:19-21 - And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. ²⁰And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

2:10-12 - ¹⁰And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹²That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Paul tells us that those who had a chance to be saved before the Rapture, but refused will be deceived and fall for the lies of the false prophet and anti-Christ. They will take the mark of the beast, and they will not get saved during the tribulation period.

Slide 9

B. The greatness of the Christian life (2:13 – 3:15)

1. The believer is chosen (2:13-14)

Read vv. 13-14

2:13-14 - ¹³But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ¹⁴Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul tells how God chose to save those who believe the gospel. Paul is not speaking of God pre-choosing whom He would save (i.e., Calvinism), but is referring to God choosing to save those who believe the gospel. God's plan "from the beginning" was to call the Gentiles to the same privileges with the Jews, not through circumcision, or observance of the Mosaic law, but by through faith in Christ.

2. The believer is challenged (2:15 – 3:5)

2:15-17 - ¹⁵Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. ¹⁶Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, ¹⁷Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Paul encourages them to now "hold the traditions" as they were taught. Traditions can refer to either a human doctrine (which is how we usually use it) or a divinely inspired one, as it is used in this case. It is Christian doctrine (teaching) which had not yet been written into NT scripture. They were to "stand fast" as well. It means "to be stationary, to persevere". They were to "hold" the truth of the Bible in these end times. In doing so, their comfort would come from God Himself.

3:1 - ¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

Again, Paul asks for prayer. But this time he asks they pray that the word of God would be unhindered by those who were vehemently opposed to him. That is a prayer that we ought to constantly pray for ourselves, for the different ministries of our church, and for all the missionaries we support.

3:2 - ²And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

Paul was in a spiritual battle at Corinth. In Acts 18, we read about what was happening that resulted in Paul asking for prayer.

Slide 10

Acts 18:5-11 - ⁵And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ. ⁶And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles...and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. ⁹Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁰For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. ¹¹And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

After things were going well and “many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized”, he seemed to be afraid and discouraged again and so Christ appeared to him in a vision by night to give him courage.

3:3 - ³But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

Despite all of the persecution and resistance they faced, Paul emphatically tells them "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil". We can never forget this: That nothing can happen to us that God does not allow AND all that He allows to happen to us He uses for our good.

Although during a trial, it often seems there is no reason or good for it, but His purpose is always being accomplished; in that we can trust and be certain. Even though God had kept Paul away from this church in Thessalonica, they had still grown in Christ, they were being established without Paul's presence. Clearly the Lord was faithful. Also, note the promise: that Christ will "keep you from evil". At times, they may harm our body, but never our eternal soul.

3:4-5 - ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. ⁵And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

He constantly exhorted them (and us) to be patiently "waiting" for the coming of Christ, yet always to be busy at the same time serving Him.

Slide 11

3. The believer is charged (3:6-15)

3:6 - ⁶Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Paul stresses the importance of doctrinal truth and separation from those who taught error is taught.

Slide 12

Romans 16:17 - Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them.

He says to even separate from a brother who is refusing to follow God's word. If someone claims to be saved and they refuse to obey God's word and wants to continue in open sin, we need to separate from them for the sake of our church's testimony, and for their own good.

1 Corinthians 5:11 - But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. (Read vv. 7-12)

3:7-12 - ⁷For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; ⁸Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: ⁹Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. ¹²Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Paul reminded them that he and his missionary team were an example of hard work, and exhorted them that they also should work in their jobs diligently. He said that those who could work and "would not" should not be given anything to eat! We can't continue to reward that type of behavior. It needs to be corrected, not continued.

Apparently, there were some in Thessalonica who had stopped working for whatever reason (we aren't told why), but they were being supported by those who continued to work. The result was those who weren't working became "busybodies" in verse 11. A busybody is meddling in other peoples' affairs.

Giving a handout to those who are able, but not willing to work leads to laziness, but worse than that, a sense of entitlement, selfishness, and ungratefulness erodes their character. Even worse than that, those characteristics are often passed onto their children.

3:13 - ¹³But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

Paul exhorted to not to be discouraged in doing good. This word of caution was perhaps necessary for two reasons:

1. To prevent an overreaction on the part of the diligent members of the Christian community. Having been ripped off by those who refused to work, it would be easy to decide to abandon social work entirely. There are needy and deserving cases.
2. To warn against abandoning necessary Christian activities, such as evangelism, teaching, and pastoring. Many people have become emotionally and physically drained in the work of the Lord, resulting in becoming discouraged and quit being active in the Lord's work. Paul warns against that.

3:14-15 - ¹⁴And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

If any man refuses to obey the teachings within this epistle, they were to "note that man, and have no company with him". Church discipline is designed to help the one who is rebelling to get right, and to keep the church from being influenced by their rebellion.

Slide 13

Conclusion (3:16-18)

3:16 - ¹⁶Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

What is the key to letting the peace of God rule in our hearts? By being thankful. Bringing our cares to God and praying with thanksgiving.

Philippians 4:6,7 - Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

3:17-18 - ¹⁷The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

This “salutation” he writes with his own hand? Why did Paul do that?

It is likely that Paul dictated the letter to someone who wrote it down. Paul, therefore, wrote the salutation and benediction with his own hand; and this was what authenticated all his epistles.

It would help against others forging a letter in Paul’s name and claiming it was his.

Slide 14

And so ends Paul’s second epistle to the Thessalonians.

This page is intentionally left blank