

2 THESSALONIANS

The Day of the Lord has not yet Come.

***T*hessalonica**, the capital of Macedonia, occupied a strategic location in the first century missionary and world evangelism. There was an ancient saying that "So long as nature does not change, Thessalonica will remain wealthy and prosperous."

She was a wealthy city with fertile soil, forest and mineral deposits in the area. Thessalonica was located on the Thermaic Gulf and was Macedonia's chief outlet to the sea. Her seaport was situated at the junction of the northern trade route to the Danube and the Egnatian Way running across the Balkans and linking the East to the Adriatic Sea and Rome.

During Paul's day, Thessalonica was a free city. The proconsul of Macedonia had official residence there, however he did not interfere with the local government unless some Roman law was violated. Rome respected the rights of these free cities, so long as no disorder and rebellion erupted. Self-government, within limits, was allowed through a city council and board of magistrates.

Paul seized the unique opportunity to reach this mobile, cosmopolitan population on his second missionary journey.

AUTHOR: Paul the apostle is the stated author (1:1; 3:17). The vocabulary, style and doctrinal content supports this claim. The external evidence for the second letter is even stronger than the first one.

DATE: Paul writes his second letter a few months after sending the first letter to the Thessalonians in A. D. 50-51 from Corinth. These two letters are among the earliest of Paul's writings and the New Testament books.

PURPOSE: Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica did not settle all the differences in the church there. This second letter is written to correct misunderstandings regarding the Second Coming of Christ which were not corrected with the first letter. The "day of the Lord" had not already come, and it will not come until after "the man of lawlessness" has appeared (2:9-10). With some of the members it had precisely the opposite result. There was some opposition to Paul's authority and even defiance toward him. Therefore, Paul repeats his "command" for discipline (II Thess. 3:6, 10, 14). There were deceivers who falsified letters in Paul's name to carry their point in the church (2:1f). A. T. Robertson strongly asserts,

Paul's keen resentment against the practice should make us slow to accept the pseudepigraphic theory about other Pauline Epistles. He calls attention to his own signature at the close of each genuine letter. As a rule he dictated the epistle, but signed it with his own hand (3:17)."

Paul's central concern is to correct their mistaken view regarding the day of the Lord and to rebuke their idleness.

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STYLE: The second letter is sharper in tone than the first. It is also briefer, almost like a quick memo shot off from the pen of a busy pastor, or mission executive. It may be with some annoyance because of their meddlesome idleness.

THEME: The day of the Lord will not arrive until after the man of sin has appeared. Second Thessalonians is the theological sequel to the first letter. It is a letter of encouragement, explanation and exhortation to a persecuted church.

Dr. Merrill C. Tenney points out that every major doctrine of the Christian faith is touched upon in these two letters of Paul.

Paul and those who received his epistles believed in one living God (I 1:9), the Father (II 1:2), who has loved men and has chosen them to enjoy his salvation (II 2:16; I 1:4). He has sent deliverance from wrath through Jesus Christ, his Son (I 1:10), and has revealed this deliverance through the message of the gospel (I 1:5; 2:9; II 2:14). This message has been confirmed and has been made real by the power of the Holy Spirit (I 1:5; 4:8). The gospel concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, who was killed by the Jews (I 2:15). He rose from the dead (I 1:10; 4:14; 5:10). He is now in heaven (I 1:10), but he will come again (I 2:19; 4:15; 5:23; II 2:1). To him is ascribed deity, for he is called Lord (I 1:6), God's Son (I 1:10), and the Lord Jesus Christ (I 1:1, 3; 5:28; II 1:1). Believers receiving the word of God (I 1:6), turn from idols, serve God and wait for the return of Christ (I 1:9, 10). Their normal growth is sanctification (I 4:3, 7; II 2:13). In personal life they are to be clean (I 4:4-6), industrious (I 4:11, 12), prayerful (I 5:17), cheerful (I 5:16). Theoretically and practically the Thessalonian letters embody all the essentials of Christian truth."

The major emphasis of Second Thessalonians is eschatological. There will be a future time of judgment coming when God will settle His accounts (1:5-10). Paul corrects their misunderstanding about the Day of the Lord (2:1). Some in the church had fallen into the error of thinking that the day had already arrived, however Paul instructs them that certain things must occur first. Before the day commences there will be an all-out rebellion against God (2:3). Many will revolt on a world wide scale against their Creator. There will be the revealing of the man of lawlessness (2:3b). As Christ shall be revealed in His "time" even so shall the antichrist. He is a mystery to be unfolded and made manifest. The terrible judgment which is to come upon him and all those who follow him is sharply contrasted by the glory of Christ in which all the elect shall share.

[The Complete Series on 1 & 2 Thessalonians](#)

Title: Introduction to 2 Thessalonians
Series: A Look at the Book

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