

Second Thessalonians

Theme: Remain Faithful / Stand Firm

Author: The Apostle Paul (1:1)

Date of Writing: c. A.D. 50–52

Reasons for Writing:

1. To correct some misunderstandings in the area of eschatology
 - the nature of the Day of the Lord.
 - the nature of the man of lawlessness
2. To correct disorderliness in the church related to false eschatology

2 Thessalonians: Christ’s Certain Return . . . Our Proper Response

Writer: Paul the Apostle

Date: c. A.D. 50-52

Key Passage: 2:15

Theme: Remain Faithful / Stand Firm

	COMMENDATION AMIDST AFFLICTION	EXPLANATION OF PROPHECY	CLARIFICATION REGARDING RESPONSE
	<p>“We give thanks for you.”</p> <p>“We speak proudly of you.”</p> <p>“We pray for you.”</p> <p>Chapter 1</p>	<p>“Let no one deceive you.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystery of Lawlessness • Restraint Removed • Man of Sin Revealed <p>“So then . . . stand firm.”</p> <p>Chapter 2</p>	<p>“Now we command you.”</p> <p>“If anyone does not obey . . .”</p> <p>“May the Lord grant peace.”</p> <p>Chapter 3</p>
Question:	Why are we suffering?	What will occur in the end?	How do I respond in the meantime?
Contrasts:	Peace amidst Persecution	Lawlessness versus Faithfulness	Work while Waiting
Statement:	“The Lord knows!”	“The day of the Lord is in the future!”	“Do not grow weary of doing good!”
Emphasis:	Comfort	Correction	Challenge

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

I. Authorship

Paul is the stated author of this letter (1:1). However, the Pauline authorship of this book has been challenged by some and is more debated than that of 1 Thessalonians.

- a. Alleged differences between 1 and 2 Thessalonians have caused some scholars to reject the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. For example, some argue that the two books present different eschatologies: Christ's return is imminent in 1 Thess. but not in 2 Thess. A careful reading of both letters, however, actually reveals a substantial similarity in style, thought, theme, and theology.
- b. Suggested discrepancies are not substantial. There are differences, but these are more in emphasis than substance. In addition, the testimony of the early church for Pauline authorship is strong, perhaps even stronger than for 1 Thessalonians. Consequently, Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians should be confidently affirmed.

II. Background of the Epistle

- a. Somehow, unknown to us, Paul heard some disturbing news of happenings at the church at Thessalonica and wrote 2 Thessalonians. This letter was penned shortly after 1 Thessalonians, most likely within eighteen months. The condition of the church is much the same in both epistles (compare 1 Thess. 1:3-4 with 2 Thess. 1:3-7; 1 Thess. 2:15-16 with 2 Thess. 3:2 and Acts 18:6). Like 1 Thess., this epistle was written from Corinth on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:17).
- b. There is some debate as to which epistle came first, but it can be affirmed from 2 Thess. 2:15, “. . . you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us,” that 1 Thessalonians preceded 2 Thessalonians. The letter referred to in 2 Thessalonians seems to presuppose the existence of 1 Thessalonians.

III. Date and Place

- a. Again, it is most probable that 2 Thessalonians was written shortly after 1 Thessalonians. Second Thessalonians lists the same associates of Paul as 1 Thessalonians, thus it is hard to assign 2 Thessalonians to a different time period.
- b. Second Thessalonians also was probably penned in Corinth during Paul's second missionary journey (A.D. 50–52).

IV. Purpose

Paul wrote this second epistle for two basic reasons:

- a. The first was to correct some misunderstandings regarding the Day of the Lord. Some false teachers produced spurious information to the effect Paul had said the Day of the Lord was present (2:1-2). Because the church was undergoing persecution (1 Thess. 2:14-16), this appeared to be a logical deduction. This problem is addressed in 2:1-12.
- b. Paul also wrote to correct disorderliness in the church. Some reasoned that they should leave their jobs because the Lord's coming was so near. Paul wrote 3:6-16 to correct this unwise and irresponsible behavior.

V. The Features of this Epistle

Second Thessalonians is much like 1 Thessalonians. However, there are some features that make them different.

- a. In 1 Thessalonians the emphasis is on the coming of the Lord in the air for His saints; in 2 Thessalonians it is on the coming of the Lord with the saints to earth.
- b. In 1 Thessalonians the coming of Christ stands out. In 2 Thessalonians the coming of the Antichrist (man of lawlessness) stands out.
- c. In 1 Thessalonians there is much said about comfort. In 2 Thessalonians there is much to do with correction.

First and Second Thessalonians Compared

1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
Describes how the Thessalonians received the Word of God	Mentions their progress in faith, love, and patience
Teaches the imminency of the Lord's return	Corrects misunderstandings about that event
Comforts and encourages the saints	Assures coming judgment on Christ's enemies
Concerns the church	Concerns Satan, Antichrist, and the world
Outstanding eschatological passage in 4:13–5:11	Outstanding eschatological passage in 2:1-12

VI. A General Outline

- a. The pastoral: a word of comfort and commendation (1:1-12)
- b. The prophetic: a word of caution and correction (2:1-17)
- c. The practical: a word of command and clarification (3:1-18)

“Take A Stand for the Lord”

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Take a stand for the Lord because:

- I. He chose you for salvation. 2:13
 1. The motive was divine love.
 2. The means was the work of the Spirit.
 3. The manner was belief in the truth.

- II. He called you for greatness. 2:14
 1. You are called by the gospel.
 2. You are called for glory.

- III. He committed to you His truth. 2:15
 1. Do not move away from the truth
 2. Do not let go of the truth.

- IV. He comforts your heart. 2:16-17
 1. God comforts us with love and hope. 2:16
 2. God establishes us in word and work. 2:17

“How do you deal with troublemakers?”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

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| I. | <u>Sometimes you avoid them.</u> | 3:6 |
| | 1. Withdraw from the disorderly (behavior). | |
| | 2. Withdraw from the divisive (belief). | |
| II. | <u>Sometimes you appeal to them.</u> | 3:7-11 |
| | 1. Appeal by example. | 3:7-9 |
| | 2. Appeal to everyone. | 3:10-11 |
| III. | <u>Sometimes you advise them.</u> | 3:12-13 |
| | 1. Work quietly. | 3:12 |
| | 2. Work responsibly. | 3:12 |
| | 3. Work diligently. | 3:13 |
| IV. | <u>Sometimes you admonish them.</u> | 3:14-15 |
| | 1. Admonish them with your absence. | 3:14 |
| | 2. Admonish them with your affection. | 3:15 |
| V. | <u>Sometimes you affirm them.</u> | 3:16-18 |
| | 1. You pray for God’s peace. | 3:16 |
| | 2. You pray for God’s presence. | 3:16 |
| | 3. You pray for God’s power. | 3:17-18 |