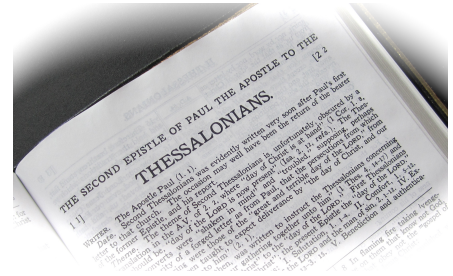


Books of The Bible

A Survey of Second Thessalonians

Introduction

- 1) The city and its people:
 - a) The city of Thessalonica had been developed by the Romans to be the best and biggest port for the trade of Macedonia and southern Illyria, the once country of Yugoslavia. In 316 B.C. Cassander (who succeeded Alexander the Great) named the city in memory of his wife, Thessalonike, a half sister of Alexander the Great. Historical records indicate that Thessalonica had about 200,000 inhabitants of many nationalities, but they were predominately Greek.
 - b) Religiously its population was like so much of the ancient world, being in a state of spiritual confusion with a multitude of gods. Not only were there the “local” gods, but there was the addition of the gods of each conquered people who were permitted to hold on to their own divines. Therefore, there was the possibility of the fluctuating decision making of which god was the most powerful, did they each have their own super ability, and were any of them right? How did one know which was more powerful, the true, or carried the most influence? Of course being dead idols these divines did not give answers to the questions of life, and darkness reigned in the minds and hearts of humanity. There was spiritual confusion.
 - c) It was a world of moral deterioration where immorality and violence dominated from the highest to the lowest in the land. Life was of little value and justice swayed like a leaf in the breeze depending on how much one had and who one knew.
 - d) In the midst of this darkness there were two groups of dissenters:
 - i) The first group were unbelievers who longed for decency and justice. By their own efforts they tried to control the sin nature through self discipline, self mutilation by flogging, and the pursuing of secret knowledge. Humans felt a need to be right with God and have a purpose for living. As such, it was perfect soil for the gospel and false religions such as Eastern Cults and Greek Philosophies.
 - ii) The second group were those who were saved, the christian assembly in Thessalonica. From that which Paul writes about them they were a model church which he used as an example to the saints in Corinth (1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Cor. 8:1-5). It would seem that the majority of those in the assembly were Gentiles because they had, “Turned to God from idols” (1 Thess. 1:9). This does not mean all were Gentiles for the Jews were idolators from before they left Egypt (Ezek. 20:4-8).
- 2) It is the epistle of "comings". The coming apostasy (ch. 2:3 “falling away”); man of sin (ch. 2:3, 8); the Lord in coming in judgment (ch. 1:7-8; 2:8-9); the coming delusion (ch. 2:11) and its consequences (ch. 2:11-12); hope of the believer (ch. 2:14); and the coming of the Lord for His own (ch. 2:1).
- 3) The coming of the Lord is distinctly different in the two Thessalonian epistles.
 - a) In 1 Thessalonians the Lord comes for His saints and with His saints (ch. 3:13; 4:16-17). When He comes for His saints the dead are raised and the living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air.
 - b) 2 Thessalonians is taken up with the coming of the Lord in judgment on the unsaved who received not the gospel (2 Thess. 1:10; 2:12).
- 3) The awareness of the Lord’s return, either for or with His saints, ought to spur us on to:
 - a) Stand more steadfastly, and hold more firmly to divine truth which has been revealed once for all (ch. 2:15; Jude 1:3).
 - b) Pray that the blessed gospel, the word of God, to saint and sinner may not be hindered (ch. 3:1).
 - c) That those who are in the forefront of presenting the gospel will be preserved (ch. 3:2).



The Author

From chapter 1:1 it is evident that Silvanus and Timothy were associated with Paul in writing this letter. Note the pronouns: “we;” “our;” “us;” “ourselves;” (2 Thess. 1:3, 4, 11; 2:1, 13, 14, 15, 16; 3:1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18); yet there are times when Paul speaks of that which he himself had done (2 Thess. 2:5; 3:17).

There has been discussion as whether Paul wrote the two epistles to the Thessalonians. However, to my mind there can be no doubt he did and there are other important matters to be dealt with.

Why Was The Letter Written?

A careful reading will reveal a number of reasons for Paul writing a second letter to these saints.

1) Reason No. 1

- a) Evidently, either by a spurious letter or false teachers, the saints were being taught that the “Day of the Lord was at hand” (2 Thess. 2:2). I draw attention to my changing the words of the KJV. I change the clause the “Day of Christ” (2 Thess. 2:2) to the “Day of the Lord”; and the words “is at hand” to “present”. I want it to be clear, we cannot just change words in a legal document, which is what the Testaments are, to suit our whims or desire. Accuracy to the original is vital. With that in mind, why make the changes?
 - i) The KJV says the “Day of Christ” so why change it to “day of the Lord”? The context is the judgment of God on the rebellious (2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:8, 12) and throughout the Old and New Testament the “day of the Lord” is always associated with darkness and judgment (1Sam. 2:12; Jer. 46:10; Joel 1:15; 2:31; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:18; 2 Pet. 3:10) and deals with events on earth. The “Day of Christ” looks on the judgment seat and deals with believers (Phil. 1:10; 2:16).
 - ii) Paul had already mentioned the “Day of the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:2). The false teachers were taking that teaching, and despite Paul teaching that it would come as a “thief in the night”, that is unexpectedly, these men were teaching it was already here.
 - iii) Furthermore, Alford, that great Greek scholar, with many others agreed that the expression “Day of Christ” is “contrary to all the oldest manuscripts”.
 - iv) The Greek word “enistēmi”, which is translated “is at hand”, is used in seven verses of the New Testament, and the context always clarifies the significance of the shade of meaning. In 2 Tim. 3:1, being a prophetic context warning of the last days, it means “is imminent”. In every other case it indicates a present situation. “Things present” (Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22); “present” (1 Cor. 7:26; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 9:9; 2 Thess. 2:2). These saints were being taught that that day of Judgment was imminent and that they had to face it. Paul now shows that it was not imminent but there were things which had to happen before that day would come. (In contrast to the Lord coming for the church there was only one period of time when the Lord could not have come back and that was while Peter was alive. The Lord informed him that he would die an old man (Jn. 21:18), but since Peter’s death there are no prophecies to be fulfilled before the Lord comes for His church.

2) Reason No. 2

- a) The second reason was to give guidance in dealing with those who live contrary to the truths of God which Paul had taught regarding work (ch. 3:6, 10, 12); becoming busybodies (ch. 3:11); and the discipline to be exercised on them (ch. 3:14-15).

3) Reason No. 3

- a) A third reason was for their encouragement (ch. 1:3-4) on their spiritual development and love for each other (ch. 1:3).

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Keys

- 1) Key Verses: ch. 1:7, 10.
- 2) Key Word: Coming (ch. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23)

Words Which Are Common To Both 1st and 2nd Thessalonians

Word or Concept	1st Thessalonians Reference	2 nd Thessalonians Reference
Work of faith	Ch. 1:3	Ch 1:11
Faith, love, (charity) patience	Ch. 1:3	Ch. 1:3-4
Know not God	Ch. 4:5	Ch. 1:8
Beloved	Ch. 1:4	Ch. 2:13
Travailing night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you	Ch. 2:9	Ch. 3:8
Abounding love	Ch. 3:12	Ch. 1:3
Pray for us	Ch. 5:25	Ch. 3:1
Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ	Ch. 3:13	Ch. 2:1
Establish you	Ch. 3:2	Ch. 3:3
Received from us	Ch. 4:1	Ch. 3:6

Words And Clauses Peculiar To 2nd Thessalonians

Words	Reference
Groweth exceedingly	Ch. 1:3
A manifest token	Ch. 1:5
To be glorified	Ch. 1:10, 12
Behaved not disorderly	Ch. 3:7
Well doing	Ch. 3:13
Being busybodies	Ch. 3:11
Note	Ch. 3:14

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The First Chapters of First and Second Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 1		2 Thessalonians 1	
v. 1	Paul	v. 1	Paul
v. 1	Grace	v. 2	Grace
v. 2	Thanks	v. 3	Thanks
v. 3	Work of faith	v. 3	Growth of their faith
v. 3	Labour of love	v. 3	Development of their love
v. 3	Patience	v. 4	Patience
v. 6	Affliction	v. 4	Persecutions
v. 7	Examples	v. 4	We glory in you
v. 10	Coming of the Lord	v. 7-10	The coming of the Lord

Contrasting Thoughts Between 1st and 2nd Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians	Reference	2 Thessalonians	Reference
Deals with the saints who have died	Ch. 4:14, 16	Deals with the saints who are living	Ch. 1:3-4
Relates mainly to believers	Ch. 4:1-12	Relates mainly to the unbelievers	Ch. 1:7-9; 2:8-12
The Lord's coming is described as a rhuomai and parousia Refer to (a) and (e) below	Ch. 1:10; 2:19	The Lord's coming is described as a apokalupsis, a parousia, and an epiphaneia Refer to (a), (b), (c) below	Ch. 1:7; 2:1, 8
Looking back to how they were saved	Chs. 1-3	Looking forward and the judgment on those who will not be saved	Ch. 1:7-9; 2:8-12
The coming of the Lord as a comfort for the bereaved	Ch. 4:18	The coming of the Lord as a comfort for the afflicted	Ch. 1:7-9
His coming is for His saints	Ch. 4:16-17	His coming is to be glorified in His saints	Ch. 1:10

Note on the words used for the Lord's coming. There are five words used in the New Testament for the coming of the Lord. They are: Parousia, Apokalupsis, Epiphany, Harpazo, and Rhuomai. As noted above, three of them are used in the Thessalonian epistles. The very basic differences are:

- a) Parousia means to be presence as the opposite of being absent
- b) Apokalupsis means to unveil, to be manifested

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- c) Epiphaneia means appearance.
- d) Harpazo means to catch away
- e) Rhuomai means to rescue

Similarities

- a) Both deal with afflictions (1 Thess. 2:14; 3:3-4; 2 Thess. 1:5-6)
- b) Both deal with the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2) See notes under “Why Was The Letter Written? - Reason No. 1.
- c) Both speak of the Lord coming from heaven (1 Thess 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7)

Suggested Outlines of The Book

These outlines have been gathered thought the years from listening to speakers whose names I do not know and reading books of long ago.

1) No. 1

- a) Chapter 1 - Encouragement from the assurance of the Lord's return
 - i) Ch. 1:3-7, The consolation of it at the time of affliction
 - ii) Ch. 1:8-12, The compensation for it in the future
 - 1. This is inspiration for the oppressed
- b) Chapter 2 - Enlightenment as to the time of the Lord's return
 - i) Ch. 2:1-12, The when and how of His coming in judgment
 - 1. This is instruction for the perplexed
- c) Exhortation on how to live considering the Lord's return
 - i) Ch. 2:13-3:5, Concerning those who are devoted to the Lord
 - ii) Ch. 3:6-15, Concerning those who are disorderly among the saints
 - 1. This is injunctions for all

2) No. 2

- a) Ch. 1:1-12 Exhortation concerning tribulation which trouble
- b) Ch. 2:1-15 Revelation concerning the man who magnifies himself
- c) Ch. 2:16-3:5 Consolation from a God who is gracious
- d) Ch. 3:6-11 Demonstration of an example which exhorts
- e) Ch. 3:12-15 Designation concerning a saint who is self willed
- f) Ch. 3:16-18 Salutation from a shepherd who authenticates his letters by His salutation

3) No. 03

- a) The coming of the Lord in manifestation to the world. It ought to be:
 - i) Ch. 1:5-7 Comforting to those who are in tribulation
 - ii) Ch. 1:7-9 Horrifying to the persecutor

4) No. 04

- a) For the:
 - i) Discouraged saints, a word of encouragement (ch. 1:1-12)
 - ii) Disturbed saints, a word of explanation (ch. 2:1-7)
 - iii) Disobedient saints a word of exhortation (ch. 3:1-18)

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- 5) No. 05
- a) Ch. 1, The objectives of the Lord's coming
 - b) Ch. 2, The order for the Lord's coming
 - c) Ch. 3, The obligations in view of the Lord's coming

Old Testament Quotations

I am not aware of any Old Testament quotations but there are at least 5 allusions or similarities of thought.

2nd Thessalonians	With Old Testament
Ch. 1:8	Psa. 50:3; Deut. 32:35
Ch. 1:9	Isa. 2:10; 19, 21
Ch. 2:4	Dan. 11:36
Ch. 2:8	Isa. 11:4
Ch. 2:4	Dan. 11:36
Ch. 3:3	Deut. 7:9

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia