



Overview for 2 Thessalonians

Purpose: The Thessalonians needed further instruction concerning the return of Christ. The believers had misconstrued Paul's first letter, interpreting it to mean that the coming of Christ was imminently upon them. Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians to clear up this confusion and correct the errors in their thinking. He instructed the church in greater detail about the events leading up to the Rapture, and the work of Satan following that event.

Author: Paul

Date Written: About A.D. 51 or 52, probably within months of his first epistle.

Setting: This letter was the second of two missives written from Corinth to a church at Thessalonica, which had been established about two or three years earlier when Paul preached in that city for a period of about a month.

Key People: Paul, Timothy, Silas, saints of the church at Thessalonica, and to Christians everywhere

Summary: A general of Alexander the Great founded Thessalonica about 315 B.C. It was located on the Gulf of Salonika in northern Greece, and had an excellent harbor. This city was considered one of the most important commercial centers in the world. Luke

mentions in Acts 17 that Paul went into the synagogue in this city and taught for at least three consecutive Sabbaths, which resulted in the beginning of the church there.

Paul's first epistle to the young church (the Book of 1 Thessalonians) dealt largely with the return of Christ and the importance of remaining steadfast and holy. After the first letter, Paul received word that the church was growing and remaining faithful to Christ even though they were being tried and persecuted. However, many had misunderstood what he had written in the first letter. Some had concluded that the Lord's coming might take place at any moment so they stopped working and waited (2 Thessalonians 3:11). Others thought that since they were experiencing trials and persecutions, they had already entered the Great Tribulation.

Paul, having been informed of these misunderstandings, explained in this second letter the sequence of events that must precede Christ's return. In the meantime, he warned them against listening to rumors and reports that the day of the Lord had already begun, and challenged them to remain steadfast in their faith. Paul then warned against laziness, and told the church to guard against anyone who did not obey what he had written in this letter. He ended his letter with personal greetings and a benediction.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ slightly.

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|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Jesus crucified; Pentecost; Church begun A.D. 30 | Stephen martyred; Paul's conversion 35 | | | Peter's ministry in Asia Minor 47 | Jerusalem council 50 | PAUL IMPRISONED (CAESAREA) 57-59 | PAUL'S HOUSE ARREST 60-62 | James (Jesus' brother) martyred 62 | Peter & Paul martyred 67/68? | Jude martyred 72 | | | | | | |
| | PAUL IN CILICIA & SYRIA 35-46 | | | PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS 46-48 | 50-52 | 53-57 | Paul's trip to Rome 59 | | | Rome destroys Jerusalem 70 | | | | | | |
| | | | Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles 41 | James (the apostle) martyred; Peter imprisoned 44 | Galatians; James 49 | 1 & 2 Thessalonians 51/52 | 1 & 2 Corinthians 55 | Romans 57 | St. Mark 58/60 | Ephesians; Colossians; Philemon 60 | Philippians 61 | St. Matthew; St. Luke 61/64 | 1 Timothy; Titus; 1 Peter 64 | Jude 65 | Acts; 2 Peter; 2 Timothy 66/68 | Hebrews 68 |

Outline

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- I. Introduction (1:1-12)
 - A. The salutation (1:1-2)
 - B. The thanksgiving (1:3-10)
 - C. The prayer (1:11-12)
- II. Instructions concerning the Day of the Lord (2:1-17)
 - A. The Day of the Lord: the present error (2:1-2)
 - B. The Day of the Lord: the preceding events (2:3-12)
 - C. The Day of the Lord: not our portion (2:13-17)
- III. Instructions concerning the believer's walk (3:1-15)
 - A. Call to prayer (3:1-5)
 - B. Call to discipline (3:6-15)
- IV. Conclusion (3:16-18)
 - A. The concluding prayer (3:16)
 - B. The answer to forgers (3:17)
 - C. The benediction (3:18)