

Investigating the Word of God

Second Thessalonians



The Roman Forum in Thessalonica

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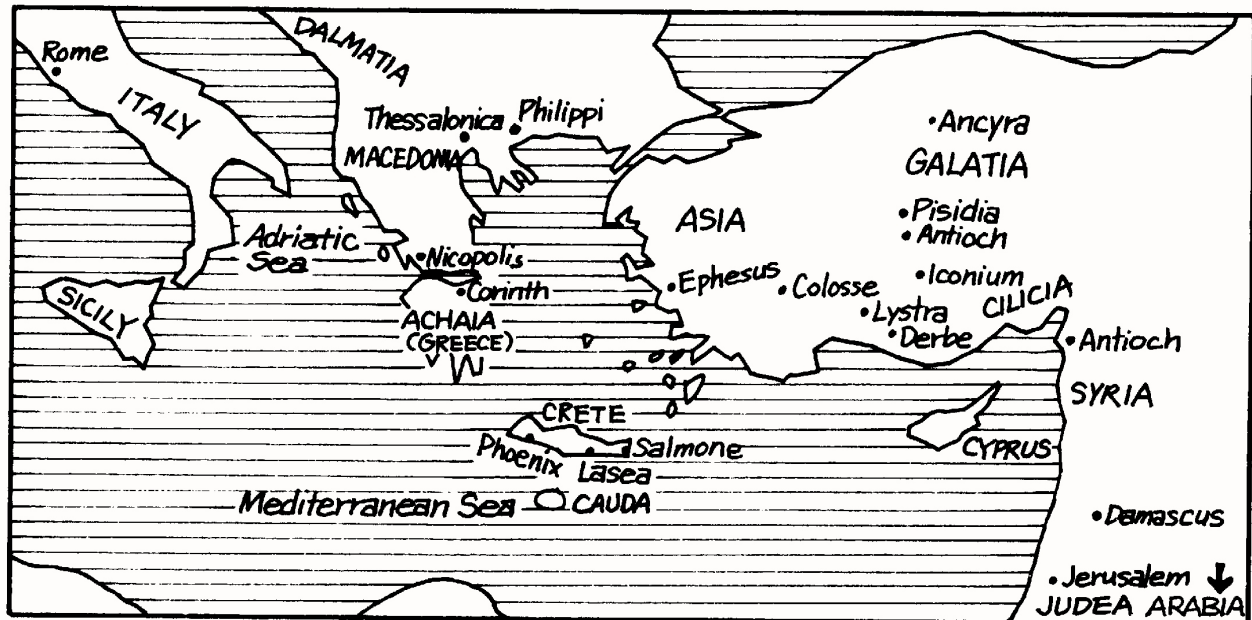
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An Introduction to Second Thessalonians

The City of Thessalonica

The city of Thessalonica was a large seaport of the Roman province of Macedonia. It was located on the slope of a hill at the northeast end of the Thermaic Gulf which is now called the Gulf of Salonika. In olden times it had various names such as Emathia and Halia. It also appears in ancient history as Therma because of the hot springs which were found near it.



It was founded in 315 B.C. by Cassander who named it after his wife, the stepsister of Alexander the Great.

When the Roman Empire organized Macedonia into a province in 146 B.C., they made Thessalonica its capital. During the Roman period, it grew to be the second largest city of that area next only to Philippi which was located about 100 miles to the northeast.

The city was designated by the Romans as a “free city.” That meant that it had its own government. It was ruled by officials known as politarchs (Acts 17:6).

Thessalonica had a commercially strategic location. Located at the head of the Thermaic Gulf, it was able to serve as a seaport for the rich agricultural plains of Macedonia. It was also the largest city on the Via Egnatia (The Egnatian Way), the main highway between Rome and the region north of the Aegean Sea. The amount of business it did with peoples from the Orient almost rivaled that done by the cities of Corinth and Ephesus. Because of its commercial importance, a good number of Jews were attracted to live there since there was an active synagogue in the city.

The city still stands today. It is known as “Salonika” and has a population of over 200,000 people.

The Church in Thessalonica

On his second preaching journey he made from the city of Antioch, the apostle Paul traveled by land to Troas. Along the way, he visited the churches he had established on his first journey.

While at Troas, Paul received the “Macedonian call” (Acts 16:9). He, in answer to that call, took Silas, Timothy and Luke and crossed the Aegean Sea to the continent of Europe. He stopped at Philippi where he established a church (Acts 16:10-40). He stayed a very short time in Philippi. When he departed, he left Luke there to teach the church.

Paul then traveled westward along the Via Egnatia, the road which stretched across Macedonia from Philippi to the Adriatic Sea. He made short stops at Amphipolis and Apollonia and then journeyed to Thessalonica.

The Jews in Thessalonica gave Paul the opportunity to speak in the synagogue for three Sabbath days. He “reasoned with them from the Scriptures” showing that Jesus came in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and promises (Acts 17:2-3). While some of the Jews believed, there was a greater number of devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women who came to believe (Acts 17:4). The Jews became jealous and gathered some wicked men from the market place and formed a mob. They attacked the house of Jason and took some of the brethren before the city officials and accused them of harboring men who were “acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus” (Acts 17:5-8). In response to this attack, Paul and Silas left by night and went to Berea (Acts 17:9-10).

Up to the time Paul wrote this letter, the church at Thessalonica had been very faithful and active. Their “work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” is pointed out in 1 Thessalonians 1:3. They had set an example for all believers in Macedonia and Achaia, particularly in the fact that from them “the word of the Lord had sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place” and that their “faith toward God had gone forth” (1:8).

They had suffered severe persecution from the Jews because the Jews resented their acceptance of Paul’s message and the obvious change in their way of life caused by it. Paul was anxious to know of their state so he sent Timothy from Athens to Thessalonica to get information about them (3:1-5; 2:17). He brought back news that the love the Thessalonians had for Paul continued and that they were standing fast in the faith (2:14; 3:4-6; 4:9-10).

The Author of the Book

The apostle Paul is without doubt the author of this book. He names himself twice (1:1; 3:17) along with Silvanus and Timothy (1:1) as he did in the first epistle (1 Thess. 1:1).

Second Thessalonians is the companion book to First Thessalonians and without this book it would be incomplete.

The Date of the Book

This book, like First Thessalonians, seems to have been sent from the city of Corinth not many months later. Some scholars have suggested that perhaps only a month or two had passed between the writing of these two books. Both books are dated somewhere around 51 to 53 A.D.

Why This Book Was Written

The apostle Paul's main purpose in writing this second book to the Thessalonians seems to be to correct a serious misunderstanding that has arisen among them after they had received his first letter. They thought the second coming of Christ was just at hand. Therefore, many of them had stopped working and apparently were doing nothing but just waiting around for the Lord's return.

The Theme of the Book

The primary theme of 1 Thessalonians is the return of Christ. That same theme was carried over into this book. Each chapter has at least one reference to it (1:7-10; 2:1, 8; 3:5).

Second Thessalonians Chapter One

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 7-8

“and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Key People

Paul

Silvanus

Timothy

Key Words

Boast

Patience

Persecutions

Tribulations

Manifest

Troubled

Vengeance

Everlasting

Glorified

Testimony

Calling

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. Who wrote this book?
2. Who was with the author while he was writing this book?
3. Why did the apostle Paul give thanks to God always for the Thessalonians?
4. Why did the apostle Paul “boast of the Thessalonians among the churches of God?
5. For what were the Thessalonians suffering?
6. Who was God going to repay with tribulation? To whom was He going to give rest?
7. Who will accompany the Lord Jesus when He is revealed from heaven?
8. According to verse eight, what two groups of people will the Lord Jesus take vengeance upon when He is revealed from heaven?
9. What will be the punishment of the two groups mentioned in the previous question?
10. When the Lord Jesus comes again, in whom will He be glorified? By whom will he be admired?

Matching

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Among the churches of God | A. Taking vengeance on the wicked. |
| _____ 2. The kingdom of God | B. Where the Lord Jesus will be glorified. |
| _____ 3. In flaming fire | C. That for which the Thessalonians suffered. |
| _____ 4. In His saints | D. To fulfill all the good pleasure of God’s goodness and the work of faith with power. |
| _____ 5. Worthy of this calling | E. Paul boasted of the Thessalonians. |

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T | F | 1. The faith of the Thessalonians was not growing. |
| T | F | 2. It is an unrighteous thing for God to repay with tribulation those who trouble His saints. |
| T | F | 3. The Lord Jesus will come with flaming fire with His mighty angels. |
| T | F | 4. The wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction. |
| T | F | 5. The Thessalonians had not believed the testimony of Paul. |

Discussion Question

How can the name of the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in a Christian?

Second Thessalonians Chapter Two

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 3-4

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

Key Words

Perdition

Exalts

Mystery

Lawlessness

Consume

Delusion

Condemned

Unrighteousness

Sanctification

Consolation

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. By what were the Thessalonians not to be shaken?
2. What two things, according to verse three, had to happen before the day of Christ would come?
3. Who will consume and destroy the lawless one?
4. According to whose working is the coming of the lawless one?
5. What will happen to those who do not love the truth?
6. Why does God send unbelievers strong delusion?
7. According to verse 14, by what had the Thessalonians been called?
8. For what purpose had the Thessalonians been called?
9. What were the Thessalonians to stand fast in and hold?
10. According to verse 16, what does God do to those whom He loves?

Matching

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. The day of Christ | A. In Jesus Christ. |
| _____ 2. The falling away | B. The Lord will consume and destroy. |
| _____ 3. The son of perdition | C. Comes first. |
| _____ 4. The lawless one | D. Had not come. |
| _____ 5. The obtaining of glory | E. Exalts himself above all that is called God or worshiped. |

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T | F | 1. The Thessalonians were not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled. |
| T | F | 2. The man of sin will never be revealed. |
| T | F | 3. The son of perdition sits as God in the temple of God. |
| T | F | 4. The mystery of lawlessness is already at work. |
| T | F | 5. Faithful Christians will be given everlasting consolation and good hope by grace. |

Discussion Question

How does God call people today? What is the purpose of that calling?

Second Thessalonians Chapter Three

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 6

“But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”

Key Words

Swiftly

Unreasonable

Withdraw

Disorderly

Authority

Busybodies

Admonish

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. For whom did Paul want the Thessalonians to pray? For what did he want them to pray in regards to them?
2. According to verse three, what would the Lord do for the Thessalonians?
3. What was Paul confident that the Thessalonians would do?
4. From whom were the Thessalonians to withdraw?
5. Why had Paul worked with labor and toil night and day while he was in Thessalonica?
6. What if a man will not work?
7. Since they were not working at all, what had some of the Thessalonians become?
8. In what is the Christian not to grow weary?
9. What were the Thessalonians to do if one of them did not obey Paul's epistle to them?
10. What were the Thessalonians not to count the disobedient person? How were they to admonish him?

Matching

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. The word of the Lord | A. Neither shall he eat. |
| _____ 2. The Lord | B. Run swiftly and be glorified. |
| _____ 3. Faithful brethren | C. Note and do not keep company with him. |
| _____ 4. The one who will not work | D. Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly. |
| _____ 5. The one who does not | E. Will establish you and guard you. |

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T | F | 1. The Thessalonians were to pray that Paul be delivered to unreasonable and wicked men. |
| T | F | 2. Paul had no confidence in the Thessalonians. |
| T | F | 3. If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. |
| T | F | 4. Instead of being busybodies, people should work in quietness and eat their own bread. |
| T | F | 5. Do not grow weary in doing good. |

Discussion Question

Since Christians are not to “grow weary in doing good,” what good things are they to be doing?

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