



# The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians

## *Introduction*

### I. THE AUTHORSHIP OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

#### A. The Proof of Pauline Authorship

1. Paul's salutation (2 Thessalonians 3:17-18; see the introductory notes for the first epistle)
2. Paul's name
  - a. Even though Paul's name was not part of his salutation, its inclusion in the epistle offers confirmation into its authorship.
  - b. Paul was initially introduced as one of the men present at the authoring of the epistle (2 Thessalonians 1:1).
    - (1) The fact that multiple men were involved is evident by the use of the pronouns "we" (2 Thessalonians 1:3) and "us" (2 Thessalonians 1:7) and "our" (2 Thessalonians 1:10).
    - (2) However, the fact that there is eventually one singular author is also evident by the use of the pronouns "I" (2 Thessalonians 2:5) and "mine" (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

#### B. The Timing of its Writing (see the introductory notes for the first epistle)

1. According to the postscript, this epistle was written from Athens just like the first epistle to the Thessalonians.
2. In fact, the two letters were likely written one right after the other.
3. As a quick reminder, it was during Paul's second missionary journey that he wrote the two epistles to the *Thessalonians* (Acts 17:15-34), both epistles to the *Corinthians* (either Acts 16 or Acts 18), and the epistle to the *Romans* (Acts 18:1-18).

#### C. The Conditions of the Time (see the introductory notes for the first epistle)

1. The first 100 years following Christ's birth was a century of transition.
2. This period witnessed a monumental spiritual struggle.
3. This period saw the desperation of the Jews. In Thessalonica (see Acts chapter 17)
  - a. Unbelieving Jews disapproved of the message and stooped to extreme lows in order to persecute, persuade, and deceive.
  - b. The hostility became so pervasive that Paul and Silas were shipped to Berea in the dark of night (Acts 17:10).
  - c. The hearts of the Bereans proved to be more fertile soil for the seed of God's word; however, the Jews in Thessalonica sent forth some vocal unbelievers to stir up the Bereans, causing Paul to be yet again sent away (Acts 17:13-14).



#### D. The Purpose of Another Epistle

1. Why would God compel Paul to address two epistles to the believers at Corinth and Thessalonica while addressing only one epistle each to the believers at Rome, Colosse, Ephesus, Philippi and Galatia? PROBLEMS!
  - a. We know the Corinthians received a second epistle, at least in part, due to their struggles with carnality.
  - b. The Thessalonians, however, received their second epistle, at least in part, to clear up confusion introduced in their midst concerning the end-times' events and their scenario and sequence.
2. The problem stated
  - a. Based upon the textual indicators found within this epistle, it is clear that some unbelievers (likely Jewish) convinced the saints that the rapture/resurrection had passed.
  - b. If this were true, these believers had been left behind.
  - c. Unfortunately, the trouble of the Thessalonian believers resulted from a letter written, delivered, and disseminated among the believers.
    - (1) The letter was written by those hoping to destroy the great hope exhibited by the Thessalonians.
    - (2) It may not have been as effective, but it was forged to indicate that it came from the apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:2).
    - (3) It is likely that the misrepresentations of truth found in this letter were spreading like wildfire through the disorderly brethren.
    - (4) Of these brethren, we read that they were not working, but traveled from one house to the next spreading false traditions contrary to those received from Paul (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11).
    - (5) The Thessalonians' hope in the blessed hope (Titus 2:13) was in peril should things not be corrected.
    - (6) This second epistle was written to clear up the resulting confusion.
    - (7) As a result, Paul provided additional insight into end-time events and admonished believers to renew their patience in waiting for Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:5).
3. The twofold purpose
  - a. Encouraging the saints to remember and hold fast those things which Paul had spoken to them (2 Thessalonians 2:5)
  - b. Encouraging the saints to rest with Paul knowing that God would later recompense tribulation to those causing the trouble (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)

## II. THE RECIPIENTS OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

### A. Paul's Time with Them (Acts 17:1-10)

1. Paul went into the synagogue for three sabbath days and reasoned with the Jews out of the scriptures (Acts 17:1-2).
2. Paul opened and alleged the truth (Acts 17:3).



3. Some in the synagogue believed (Acts 17:4).
4. Many of the Jews believed not (Acts 17:5-9).
5. Paul and Silas were sent away in the night (Acts 17:10).

#### B. Paul's Statements Concerning Them

1. Their faithfulness since receiving the word (2 Thessalonians 1:3-4)
2. The concern for their steadfastness (2 Thessalonians 2:2, 15, 17)
3. The confidence of the apostle (2 Thessalonians 3:4)
4. Their need for separation (2 Thessalonians 3:10-15)

### III. THE BREAKDOWN OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

#### A. The Basic Statistics

1. Chapters = Three
2. Verses = Forty-seven
  - a. Twelve in chapter 1
  - b. Seventeen in chapter 2
  - c. Eighteen in chapter 3
3. Sentences
  - a. One asking sentence
  - b. Twenty-nine telling sentences
4. Words = 1,022
  - a. Lord—21 times
  - b. God—19 times
  - c. Christ—13 times
  - d. Jesus—12 times
  - e. Work—4 times
  - f. Disorderly—3 times

#### B. The Position of the Book

1. Order
  - a. Fifty-third book in the Bible
  - b. Fourteenth book in the New Testament
2. Location
  - a. Second Thessalonians is the ninth of Paul's fourteen epistles.
  - b. Paul's letters to Thessalonica were among his Missionary Epistles.

#### C. The Outline of the Book

1. The apostle's love and prayer for the Thessalonian church (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)
2. The concern for the Thessalonian church (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17)
3. The walk of the Thessalonian church (2 Thessalonians 3:1-18)