An Overview Of The Book Of 2 Thessalonians

The City Of Thessalonica:

See the Overview Of The Book Of 1 Thessalonians in The Book of 1 Thessalonians.

The Church Of Thessalonica:

See the Overview Of The Book Of 1 Thessalonians.

The Writer Of The Second Letter To The Thessalonians:

Paul is the author of 2 Thessalonians. As in 1 Thessalonians 1:1, the names of Paul, Silvanus (the Roman name of Silas), and Timothy are all mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 1:1. Silas and Timothy did not author the letter of 2 Thessalonians, as they did not write the letter of 1 Thessalonians. Silas and Timothy are mentioned because they were still with Paul in Corinth and the Christians in Thessalonica knew them as well as Paul. In 2 Thessalonians the personal pronouns "we", "us", and "our", are found, which indicate that Silas and Timothy agreed with what Paul wrote in this Second Letter to the Thessalonians. Second Thessalonians 2:5 and 3:17 clearly show that Paul himself was the actual writer of the letter, for in these verses Paul referred to himself with the personal pronoun "I".

The Recipients Of The Second Letter To The Thessalonians:

"To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thessalonians 1:1.

Date Of The Second Letter To The Thessalonians:

This second letter was probably written in early A.D. 52, a few months after Paul wrote his First Letter to the Thessalonians in the fall of A.D. 51.

The Occasion For The Writing Of The Second Letter To The Thessalonians:

Some commentators have thought Paul wrote his Second Letter to the Thessalonians to clear up confusion caused by his first letter. In his first letter Paul had written about the second coming of Christ. Some have theorized that Paul's having written about the second coming of Christ in his first letter led members of the church in Thessalonica to believe the coming of Christ was most imminent. Those members therefore had quit their jobs, refused to work, and had become idle busybodies and gossips. Thus, the commentators conclude, Paul wrote his second letter to correct the Thessalonians' misconception about the coming of Christ and to admonish them to work.

This explanation seems less than an appropriate conclusion and occasion for Paul to have written his Second Letter to the Thessalonians. First, the sin of idleness did not erupt after Paul's first letter. It was already a problem before Paul wrote his first letter. In his first letter Paul wrote that the members of the church should make it their ambition to lead quiet lives, to mind their own business, and to work to support themselves (see 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12). Second, the sin of idleness does not seem to have been a consequence of the Thessalonians' thinking the coming of Christ was imminent. In his first letter Paul did not relate the members' idleness with the second coming of Christ but with their need to work to practice brotherly love. Third, it does not appear that the members of the church in Thessalonica thought the coming of Christ was imminent and soon to happen. Rather, it seems clear that they were being upset by false reports that were supposed to have come from Paul that the day of Christ's coming in judgment had already occurred (see 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2).

What, then, did lead Paul to write his second letter? It appears that not too long after Paul had written his first letter he received news in some way about matters in the church of Thessalonica. These were matters Paul knew he needed to address.

The persecution of the Christians there continued to be pushed by the majority of the Jews who had hardened their hearts against the gospel of Jesus Christ and who continued to be jealous of its success. In the face of this severe persecution the Christians in Thessalonica were remaining faithful. To strengthen them in their endurance they needed Paul's further encouragement. Paul wrote to assure them that as a result of the affliction they suffered, they would be counted worthy of the kingdom of God. What was

more, they would receive justice for the wrongs being done to them. When Christ returned in judgment he would afflict those who were afflicting them.

Paul had received word that some members of the church were continuing in their sin of being idle busybodies who refused to work to support themselves. It appears that the Greek men shunned manual labor, left the work to their wives and servants, and occupied themselves in gathering for idle gossip. They leeched off of others rather than work to support themselves. Those members needed to be admonished to repent of their sin.

Furthermore, the members of the church in Thessalonica were having their faith shaken by counterfeit messages and reports supposedly coming from Paul that Christ had already returned without their knowing about it. They needed to be reassured this had not happened and that Paul had never said that it had happened.

The Place Where The First Letter To The Thessalonians Was Written:

Paul appears to have written this letter while he was still in Corinth and while Silas and Timothy were still with him.

Purpose Of The Second Letter To The Thessalonians:

1. To encourage the Thessalonians in their faithfulness in the face of the persecution they were enduring and to assure them that Christ would right the wrong being done to them when he returned to judge the world (see 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10).

2. To clarify that Paul had never said that Christ had already come in judgment, and to instruct them that Christ would not return until after the Great Antichrist, the man of sin, had been revealed (see 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

3. To encourage the Thessalonians to discipline the idle busybodies in their midst so they would repent of their sin (see 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).

Theme:

To encourage the Thessalonians in their faith and to correct the false reports and the lack of discipline among them.

2 Thessalonians

Part 1: Greeting 2 Thessalonians 1:1, 2

1 ¶ Paul and Silvanus[1] and Timothy;
¶ To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
¶ 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Part 2: God Will Punish the Persecutors 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

¶ 3 We ought to always give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is *indeed* proper, for your faith is growing wonderfully and the love of each one of you for one another is growing even more,
4 so that we ourselves boast about you[2] in the churches of God over your perseverance and faith in all of your persecutions and tribulations that you are enduring.
5 *This is* a plain indication of the righteous judgment of God, to consider you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering,
6 since[3] it is a righteous judgment[4] with God to repay those who are afflicting you with affliction

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[1] Silvanus is the Roman name of Paul's co-worker Silas

[2] Lit. boast in you

[3] The Greek particle means "provided that" or "if indeed"; it is a kind of rhetorical politeness that expresses a certainty about which there is no doubt; therefore it is translated "since"

7 and *to give* to you who are being afflicted rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed[5] from heaven with his powerful angels
8 in a flaming fire, inflicting punishment on those who do not know God and do not listen to the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
9 These will undergo the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of[6] the Lord and from the glory of his power,
10 when he comes to be glorified in his saints[7] and to be marveled at on that day among all those who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
11 For these reasons[8] also we are always praying for you, that our God may consider you worthy of your[9] calling and may bring to fulfillment every desire of goodness and every work of faith with *his* power,
12 in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.

Part 3: The Coming of the Man of Lawlessness Will Precede Christ's Second Coming 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

2 ¶ Now we ask you, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him,
2 that you not become easily shaken from your[10] understanding and continue to be alarmed neither by a spirit nor by a message[11] nor by a letter as *though coming* through us, that the day of the Lord has come.
3 Do not let anyone deceive you in any way! For *it will not come* unless the apostasy[12] comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of eternal destruction,
4 who opposes and exalts himself over every *so*-called god or object of worship, with the result that he sits down in the temple of God, proclaiming himself that he is God.
5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I used to tell you these things?
6 And you know what is holding *him* back now, in order that he may be revealed in his own time.
7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only the one who is holding *it* back *will do so* until *he* shall get out of the way.[13]
8 And at that time the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of his mouth and do away with at the appearance of his coming,
9 whose coming is in accordance with the working of Satan in all power and miraculous signs and lying wonders
10 and in association with all deception of wickedness for those who are perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth so that they *may* be saved.
11 And for this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie,
12 in order that all who did not believe in the truth but delighted in the wickedness may be judged.

Part 4: Thessalonians Chosen for Salvation 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

¶ 13 As for us, we ought to always give thanks to God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation by the sanctifying work of the Spirit and faith in the truth,

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[4] The Greek word means passing a just judgment on others; what is agreeable to justice and law

[5] Lit. at the revelation of the Lord Jesus

[6] Lit. away from the face of

[7] Lit. holy ones

[8] Lit. with respect to which

[9] Lit. the

[10] Lit. the

[11] Lit. word

[12] Apostasy is a falling away, a defection, an abandonment

[13] Lit. shall get out of the middle

14 for which he called you through our gospel, for obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
15 So then, brothers, keep standing firm and holding on to the teachings[14] which you have been taught whether by word *of mouth* or by our letter.
16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting comfort and good hope in grace,
17 encourage your hearts and strengthen *you* in every good work and word.

Part 5: Paul's Exhortations 2 Thessalonians 3:1-15

3 ¶ Finally, brothers, keep praying for us, that the word of the Lord keeps spreading rapidly and being honored just as *it did* also with you,
2 and that we may be delivered from evil and wicked men; for not everyone has faith.[15]
3 But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.
4 We have confidence in the Lord regarding you, that what we are commanding, you are doing and will do.
5 Moreover may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient endurance of Christ.
¶ 6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that* you are to keep away from every brother who is living idly[16] and not according to the teaching[17] that they received from us.
7 For you yourselves know how *you* ought to imitate us, because we were not idle[18] among you
8 neither did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it;[19] on the contrary, with toil and hard and difficult labor we worked night and day so as not to be a burden on any of you;
9 not that we do not have this right, but *we did so* to make ourselves an example for you, so that you may imitate us.
10 For indeed when we were with you, we used to give this order to you, that if anyone is unwilling to work, neither shall he eat!
11 For we hear *that* some are living idly[20] among you. They are not working at all; rather they are busybodies;
12 To such men as this we give *this* order and urge *them* in the Lord Jesus Christ that they work in a quiet manner and eat their own bread.
13 And as for you, brothers, do not grow weary of doing what is right.
¶ 14 But if anyone does not follow our instruction through this[21] letter, keep taking special note of this person,[22] *so as* not to go on associating with him, in order that he may be put to shame;
15 and yet do not consider *him* as an enemy, but warn *him* as a brother.

Part 6: Paul's Conclusion
2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

¶ 16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.
¶ 17 I, Paul, *write this* greeting with my own hand, which is a sign in every letter; *this is* the way I write.
18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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[14] Or traditions

[15] Lit. for the faith does not belong to all

[16] Lit. who is walking in a disorderly manner; the disorderly manner of life is explained in the following verses, which make it clear the disorderliness was idleness and laziness

[17] Lit. tradition

[18] Lit. were not disorderly

[19] Lit we did not eat bread from anyone without payment, or as a gift

[20] Lit. walking disorderly

[21] Lit. the

[22] Lit. this one