

2 THESSALONIANS

This epistle was written a very short time after the first letter--possibly within 5 or 6 weeks. It was also written from Corinth.

Its Theme: Prophecy concerning the Day of the Lord. (Note the corrected translation of 2:2.) We can assume that certain teachers were teaching that the Church was going through the Great Tribulation--a very up-to-date problem. A letter had even been sent to the Thessalonians with Paul's name forged on it. Cf. 2:2. Some of the Thessalonian believers were inclined to believe it because of the intense suffering they were going through.

The situation had created two results among the Thessalonian believers:

- 1) Some were troubled (1:7). They were inclined to be discouraged. Paul is concerned with them from 1:3-2:17.
- 2) Some were idle--apparently thinking that the coming of the Lord was very near. This, Paul takes up in the last chapter: 3:6-15.

Note: Paul is patient and concerned about those in the first group, but severe as well as concerned for those in the second. Both groups were recognized by Paul in his first epistle.

The Outline:

- I. Introduction (1:1, 2). For a troubled church there is nothing more reassuring than to know the truth. A suggestion of this is given in the Introduction where we have a repetition of Paul's reference to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are "in" Them, and all of their needs will be met "from" Them.
- II. Words of Encouragement (1:3-2:17)--in two parts. Here we have:
 - 1) Two sections of thanksgiving (1:3, 4; 2:13, 14).
 - 2) Two sections for instruction (1:5-10; 2:3-12). Both have to do with the Day of the Lord.
 - 3) Two sections for intercession (1:11, 12; 2:16, 17).
 - 4) Two sections for exhortation (2:1, 2; 2:15).
 - A. Part One (1:3-2:2).
 1. The first thanksgiving--for the evidence in their lives of spiritual growth (1:3, 4).
 2. The first instruction (1:5-10). He explains about the terrible judgment which will fall on those who do not know the Lord when the Lord returns to the earth.
 3. The first intercession (1:11, 12). He is concerned that that for which he gave thanks in 1:3, 4 may continue.
 4. The first exhortation (2:1, 2). V. 1 deals with the Rapture; v. 2, with the Second Coming--the Day of the Lord. The first is to give believers encouragement concerning the second.
 - B. Part Two (2:3-17).
 1. The second instruction (2:3-12). Here Paul tells why the Day of the Lord cannot come as yet, what will precede it, and about the appearance of the Antichrist--"that man of sin," "that wicked (one)."
 2. The second thanksgiving (2:13, 14). Here Paul turns to the divine side of salvation. These verses are parallel with Rom. 8:29, 30.
 3. The second exhortation (2:15)--just one verse.
 4. The second intercession (2:16, 17). This is for their encouragement and establishment.
- III. Words of Confidence (3:1-5). He has confidence in:
 - 1) Their prayers for him.
 - 2) The Lord for them.
 - 3) In them.
 - 4) His prayers for them.

The Outline concluded:

- IV. Words of Rebuke (3:6-15). This has to do with those who are disorderly, those who are idle. Paul's words are stern, but even here he expresses hope.
- V. Conclusion (3:16-18).