

2 Thessalonians

Author - Paul is the author of both 1 & 2 Thessalonians. (2 Thess. 1:1; 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:18).

1. Internal evidence is strong for the Pauline authorship.
 - a. The style of writing and vocabulary are definitely Pauline.
 - b. There are great similarities between the two epistles, but there are also differences due to some disturbing changes that had developed at Thessalonica.
 - c. There is no evidence this epistle was written by a forger.
 - d. Some have tried to use the similarity of the two epistles to prove 2 Thessalonians was the work of a forger pretending to be Paul.
 - e. Those who have done this overlook there are many differences in the two epistles,, and the second letter is not a rehash of the first.
2. External evidence for Paul's authorship is also strong.
 - a. It is included in the Muratorian Canon, the Old Syriac, the Old Latin and it is found in the Canon of Marcion.
 - b. Polycarp quotes 2 Thessalonians in a context in which he mentions Paul.
 - c. Justin Martyr and Irenaeus also make reference to this epistle and ascribe it to Paul.
 - d. Clement of Alexandria also quotes this epistle making reference to 2 Thessalonians 3:1,2.

To Whom Written - 2 Thess. 1:1

1. It was written to the same brethren addressed in the first epistle. (1 Thess. 1:1).
2. Thessalonica was the capital city of the province of Macedonia.
3. The church had been established there by Paul and Silas on the second missionary journey. (Acts 17:1-9).
4. The second missionary journey is dated about A.D. 50 to 52.

Date of Epistle

1. It appears it was written shortly after the first epistle.
2. This is mostly based on its similarity to 1 Thessalonians.
3. The first epistle had been written about A.D. 51 likely from Corinth. (Acts 18:11).

Acts 18:11 And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

4. This epistle was likely written about A.D. 52. Most believe it was written a few months or perhaps a year after the first letter.
5. Some of the things occurring at Thessalonica demanded immediate attention.
6. Paul knew it was a mistake to delay dealing with the problems of this congregation.
7. There are problems today that demand immediate attention, and it can be disastrous to ignore the problems and not act to correct them.

Purpose Of Letter

1. Paul wished to express his deep gratitude for the faithfulness of these Christians who were young in the faith. (2 Thess. 1:3).
2. This young congregation was still undergoing persecution and needed prayer and encouragement. (2 Thess. 1:4).
3. Some were troubled believing that the Lord was immediately coming. (2 Thess. 2:3).
 - a. Paul did not know when the Lord was coming. (Matt. 24:36).
 - b. He did have revelation that the Lord's second coming would not be immediate. (2 Thess. 2:3).
 - c. This book deals extensively with eschatology - last things.
 - d. The first epistle also dealt with the subject of eschatology chapters 4 and 5. (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-6).
 - e. It is interesting that eighteen of its forty-seven verses deal with this subject.
4. Some of the brethren there had become lazy and were refusing to work. (2 Thess. 3:9, 10)
 - a. This may have been based on the erroneous notion Jesus was coming very soon.
 - b. It may have been based on pure laziness and a desire to let others support them.
 - c. Whatever was motivating their laziness was not acceptable.
 - d. God expects His children to work and provide for themselves and others. (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8; Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10).
5. They also needed instruction on the need and the how of church discipline. (2 Thess. 3: 14,15).

Place of Writing

1. One cannot be sure about the place of writing, but it was likely Corinth from which Paul wrote the 1st epistle.
2. Corinth was a time when Paul, Silas and Timothy were together.
3. There is no evidence these three brothers were ever together again, but it is possible.

2 Thessalonians

Salutation

1-2

2 Thess. 1:1 Paul and Silvanus [Silas] and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy” - Silas and Timothy are included in this greeting because of their work with these brethren and the great love they also had for them.
 - a. The salutation is nearly identical to the salutation found in 1 Thessalonians 1:1.
 - b. Paul here used the words “our Father” versus “the Father” in his first epistle.
 - c. “Our Father” may be a little more personal, but there does not appear to be a great difference in the way Paul used these words.
 - d. In the very next verse he spoke of God as “the Father.” (2 Thess. 1:2).
2. “To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”
 - a. The word “church” means “called out” referring to those who had been called out of darkness into the body of Christ.
 - b. The word church can be used to refer to a single congregation as here, or it can be used to refer collectively or universally to refer to all local congregations. (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23, 25).
 - c. This letter once again is being addressed to God’s congregation in Thessalonica.
 - d. Jesus is put on equality as Deity with God the Father. (Jn. 1:1;10:30; 14:9; Col. 1:13; 2:9; Phil. 2:5-11).

2 Thess. 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. “Grace” means “favor” and here recognized that “grace” and “peace” come from both the Father and from Jesus.
2. These blessings of “grace” and “peace” come from Deity.
3. “Grace” leads to inner peace and blessings.

Thanksgiving For These Brethren

3-4

2 Thess. 1:3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;

1. “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren” - Paul, Silas and Timothy were very proud of these brothers and sisters.
 - a. They were fairly new Christians but they were doing so well spiritually.
 - b. McCord “We are obligated to thank God.” It was both a privilege and obligation to pray for them.

- c. “Always” is from “pantote” [**pahn** tah teh] meaning “always, at all times.”
- d. The Greek “opheilo” [ah **fay** loh] means “to owe, be indebted, to be bound, obligated.”
- e. We ought to ask God to bless our efforts to convert others and also give thanks for those accepting the gospel.

2. “as is only fitting” - NIV has “and rightly so” – Lit. “as it is fitting [proper]

- a. It was proper for them to give thanks for these brethren.
 - b. It would be very improper to fail to give thanks for these brethren who were doing so well spiritually.
 - c. There were some problems in the church that needed immediate correction, but there were many things right with the congregation.
3. “because your faith is greatly enlarged” - The words “greatly enlarged” has the idea of growing abundantly or exceedingly.

a. “Faith” is not static, but it grows with experience and maturity in Christ.

b. God expects our faith to grow and abound.

1) The Christian will not exceed his/her faith.

2) God blesses faith, but not doubt and distrust. (Heb. 11:6; Jas. 1:5,6; 1 Jn. 5:4).

c. The Christian life is a life of growth and a life of adding and growing in the Christian graces. (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

2 Pet. 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Pet. 1:6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

2 Pet. 1:7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

2 Pet. 1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet. 1:9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

2 Pet. 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

2 Pet. 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

d. Paul had sent Timothy to Thessalonica to accomplish that very thing. (1 Thess. 3:2).

1 Thess. 3:2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,

e. It is interesting that Paul spoke of something lacking in their faith in 1 Thessalonians 3:10, but here he called attention to their growing faith.

1 Thess. 3:10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, **and may complete what is**

lacking in your faith?

4. “and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater” - The words “each one” are significant and once again manifest the greatness of that church.
 - a. Paul spoke several times of their love for one another in the first epistle to them. (1 Thess. 1:3; 3:6,12; 4:1; 5:8, 13).
 - b. Their love was growing even greater for one another, and this should be true of Christians today.
 - c. With time and contact and close association love should grow and abound.
 - d. It is sad when members of a congregation remain virtual strangers and have little knowledge or feelings for one another.
 - e. A congregation that is not growing in love needs to carefully examine itself because love for one another is essential - not an option.

2 Thess. 1:4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly [boast] of you among the churches [congregations] of God for your perseverance [patient endurance] and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

1. “therefore, we ourselves speak proudly [boast] of you among the churches of God “ - The words “we ourselves” emphasize they boasted about the faith and conduct of these brethren.
 - Others may have boasted of their exemplary conduct, but so did Paul, Silas and Timothy.
 - This was not tooting their own horn as some suggest, but the conduct of these faithful brethren.
 - a. They boasted of these brethren among the other congregations of God.
 - 1) This was to provoke them to even greater love and service. See Heb. 10:24

Heb. 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

- 2) Paul sometimes challenged congregations to do better by giving examples of what other congregations were doing. (2 Cor. 8:1-15; 2 Cor. 9:1-5).
- 3) Being challenged to do what others are doing will most often motivate churches to greater commitment and work.
- 4) Jesus asked a very provocative question in Matthew 5:47

Matt. 5:47 "If you greet only your brothers, **what more are you doing *than others*?** Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

- Christians are never to be content with mediocrity or merely to be lukewarm.
- Though we cannot earn our salvation the Lord expects us to excel in the way we live and serve. . See Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 3:1-2; Jas. 1:26,27.
- The Lord nor His apostles never praised indifference, mediocrity, unfaithfulness, lukewarmness, procrastination,

laziness, etc.

- b. "Churches of God" was not a name, but denotes ownership of the church. It has the meaning of "God's church."
- c. The church did not have a name and did not need one since denominationalism did not exist and was not a part of God's plan for His people.
- d. The 1st century church was not perfect, but they were one in faith and doctrine recognizing and accepting the "ones" of Ephesians 4.

1) They were united on the seven ones of Ephesians. 4:1-6.

Eph. 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Eph. 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

Eph. 4:3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph. 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph. 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Eph. 4:6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

2) They were also united in regard to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the Lordship of Jesus, the essentiality of baptism, the essentiality of the church, worship based on the scriptures, etc.

e. Here are some designations for the church.

Church of God - 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32	Church of the firstborn [ones]- Heb. 12:23. The Greek is plural.	The church - Acts 8:1; Rom. 16:5
Church of Christ -Rom. 16:16	The household of God - 1 Tim. 3:15	The household of faith - Gal. 6:10
The kingdom of God or Christ - Rom. 8:12; Jn. 18:36; Eph. 5:5	The flock of God - Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2	The temple of the Holy Spirit - 1 Cor. 3:16,17.
The body of Christ - Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23.	The kingdom - Matt. 6:33; Lk. 1:33	The bride of Christ - 2 Cor. 11:2

2. "for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure" - See 1 Thess. 1:3, 6

1 Thess. 1:3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

1 Thess. 1:6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

a. Their persecution had come by the hands of their own "countrymen." (1 Thess. 2:14).

1 Thess. 2:14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

b. The Christian life was not easy in Thessalonica, but these brethren patiently endured even when persecuted.

- c. The words “which you endure” denotes faithfulness even when persecuted.
- d. Christ nor the apostles had not promised an easy life for those accepting and serving Christ. (Matt. 5:10-12; Jn. 15:20-23; 2 Tim. 3:12).

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