

Prison Mission Association



SECOND THESSALONIANS

The book of 2 Thessalonians was probably written a few months after Paul's first epistle to the same church. Like the first letter it addresses confusion the believers had about when the Lord would return and how they fit into God's plan for the last days. Apparently some had tried to deceive the Thessalonians to convince them that Christ had already returned and they were left behind to suffer tribulation and persecution. Paul encourages them because of their constant faith but also reprimands those who are lazy and not working to support themselves.

Before beginning this study you should take time to read through 2 Thessalonians from beginning to end. This will help you better understand each section in the context of the entire book. While doing the study, read each question carefully using the given Scripture reference to find your answer. May the Lord bless you as you study the book of 2 Thessalonians.

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: The apostle Paul

PLACE OF WRITING: Written from Corinth.

DATE OF WRITING: 2 Thessalonians was probably written in 50 or 51 AD while Paul was residing in Corinth for 18 months as recorded in Acts 18:11. It probably was written about six months after First Thessalonians.

PURPOSE, THEME AND SUBJECT MATTER

OF THE LETTER: Thessalonica was the most prominent city in the area of northern Greece known as Macedonia. It was a bustling seaport and at the intersection of two major Roman roads. It had a population of about 200,000 at the time Paul visited it. It had a fairly large Jewish population and thus a synagogue where Paul preached for three Sabbath days (Acts 17:2).



After establishing the church in Thessalonica, Paul moved on to Berea, Athens and Corinth (Acts 17-18). While in Corinth he was joined by Timothy and Silas (Acts 18:5). They returned with news from the Thessalonian church which prompted Paul to pen the first letter of encouragement and instruction to them. Paul was thankful that the believers had remained faithful but apparently there were a number of issues that had arisen and Paul felt it was

necessary to correct their thinking. The issue of greatest concern was that there was confusion among the believers about the nature of the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of believers that had died. After Timothy and Silas returned from delivering the letter, apparently there were still questions among the believers about whether the persecution they were going through meant that they had missed the rapture and were going through the period of tribulation spoken of in the Old Testament. Paul explains in this second letter that certain things had to take place before Christ would return to bring forth judgment on the earth.

Please read the entire book of 2 Thessalonians. _____ Check.

Please memorize the following verse and be prepared to write it out at the end of this lesson.

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”
(2 Thessalonians 3:5 – KJV)

CHAPTER ONE

Read 2 Thessalonians Chapter 1 _____ Check

GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

1. (v. 1) Who was together with Paul when he wrote this letter? _____
2. (v. 1) How does Paul describe the Thessalonian church? _____

3. (v. 2) What does Paul wish for them? _____

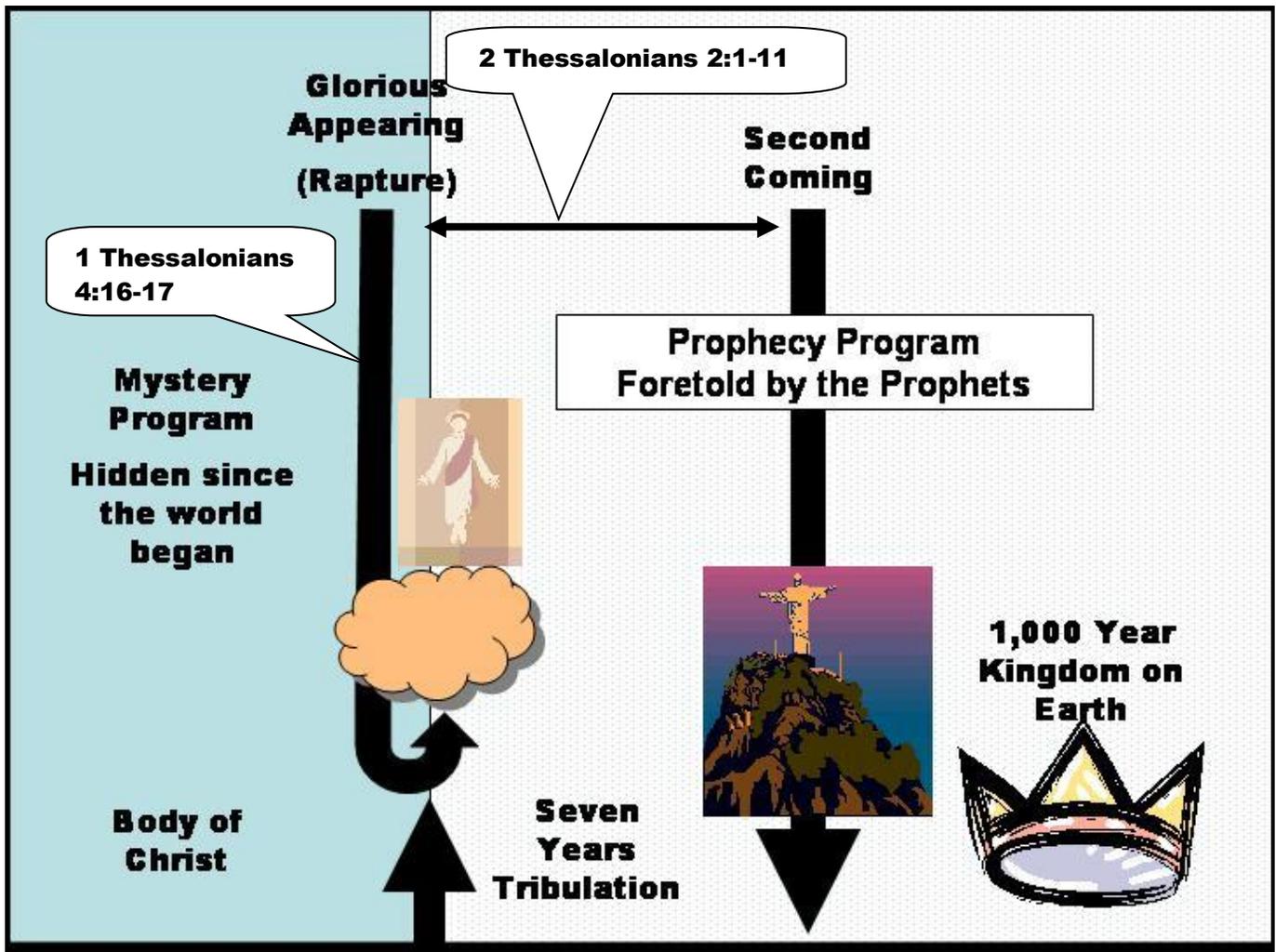
4. (v. 3) Why does Paul thank God for the Thessalonian believers? _____

5. (v. 4) What does Paul glory in (boast – NIV) to the other churches about the Thessalonians? _____

6. (v. 4) What were the Thessalonian believers going through when Paul wrote to them? _____

Note: In 2 Thessalonians 1:5 – 2:12 Paul is clarifying the confusion in the Thessalonian church about the persecution they were experiencing and how that related to the end times that are prophesied in the Old Testament. In 1 Thessalonians Paul reassures the believers that they, and those that had already died, would not be left behind when the Lord appeared to take the believers to be with Him. In that letter he introduced the truth of the “glorious appearing” of the Lord, or the event commonly called the “Rapture” in which the Church, the Body of Christ, would be removed from the Earth before the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

The Thessalonians must have still been confused, since they were experiencing persecution, and they could know from the Old Testament scriptures that a period of tribulation would precede the second coming of the Lord (Jeremiah 30:7). They must have believed that they were experiencing that period of history at that time. Paul explains to them that the trials they were experiencing were not part of the prophesied tribulation because certain things had to take place before that period of time could begin, specifically a personality he calls “the man of lawlessness” (KJV – Man of Sin) must appear. He is referring to the Antichrist figure that Daniel calls “the prince (ruler- NIV) that shall come” (Daniel 9:26) and the “king that exalts himself” (Daniel 11:36) and that John identifies as the “beast” in Revelation 13:1-10. Refer to the chart below and notice that 1 Thessalonians is teaching about the Rapture while this portion of 2 Thessalonians is describing the events after the Rapture which the members of the Body of Christ will not experience.



THE LORD’S VENGEANCE

7. (vs. 5) For what were the Thessalonians suffering? _____

8. (vs. 6) What will God do to those who persecute the Church (compare Romans 12:19)? _____

9. (vs. 7) What will He do for those that are persecuted? _____

10. (vs. 7) When will God's judgment take place? _____

Note: Compare this description of the Lord's return with Revelation 19:12; Matthew 25:31; Daniel 7:9

11. (vss. 8-9) Describe the punishment for those that do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus? _____

12. (vs. 10) What will happen when the Lord comes? _____

13. (vss 11-12) Describe in your own words Paul's prayers for the Thessalonian believers. _____

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS (SIN)

Read 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2:1-12 _____ Check

1. (vs. 1) What is the topic Paul is about to discuss? _____

2. (vs. 2) What reaction does Paul not want from the believers concerning this topic? _____

3. (vs. 2) What would the false reports be saying that might upset the believers? _____

4. (vs. 3) What two things must take place before the day of the Lord (Christ – KJV) can take place? _____

5. (vs. 3) How is the man of lawlessness (sin – KJV) described? _____

Note: The Greek word that is translated as “rebellion” in the NIV and “falling away” in the KJV is *apostasia* which can refer to a departure, in fact the root word from which this is derived is often translated “depart” in the New Testament. Furthermore, the Greek contains the definite article “the.” Therefore, the passage can be talking about “the departure” and Paul is most likely referring to the Rapture. Therefore, he is saying that the Antichrist cannot be revealed until the Rapture of the Church, the Body of Christ takes place.

6. (vs. 4) Describe how the man introduced in verse 3 will behave. _____

Note: Compare the description here with Daniel 9:27; 11:36-37; Matthew 24:15 and Revelation 13:5-8. It seems clear that they are referring to one and the same.

7. (vs. 5) Was this first time the Thessalonian believers heard this teaching? _____
8. (vss. 6-7) Why has the Man of Lawlessness (Sin – KJV) not yet been revealed? _____

Note: These verses tell us that the Antichrist cannot be revealed to the world until something which holds him back is removed. This could refer to one of two things. It might mean the Church, the Body of Christ, which must first be removed through the Rapture before the Antichrist will be known. It might also refer to the Holy Spirit who indwells believers, who will be removed at the time of the Rapture. The second option is a possibility because the phrase “the one who holds it back” (he who letteth – KJV) uses a masculine pronoun which usually refers to a personality. However, although the Holy Spirit will accompany the believers at the rapture, He can never be removed from the world, and He will play a prominent role in the events of the end times. In either case, it seems clear that Paul is saying that the Antichrist cannot be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church.

9. (vs. 8) What will happen to the lawless one (the Wicked – KJV)? _____

10. (v. 8) When will the overthrow of the Lawless One take place? _____

11. (vss. 9-10) The Lawless One will do whose bidding while on Earth? What kinds of things will he do? _____

Note: Compare this description of the activity of the Antichrist with that of Revelation 13:13-14.

12. (vs. 10) Why will those that are deceived perish? _____

13. (vs. 11) What will be sent to those that do not believe the truth? _____

ENCOURAGEMENT TO STAND FIRM

Read 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2:13-16 _____ Check

14. (vs. 13) How have the believers been chosen for salvation? _____

15. (vs. 14) How did God call the Thessalonians? _____

16. (vs. 15) What does Paul encourage the Thessalonians to do? _____

17. (vs. 15) In what two ways had the teachings (traditions –KJV) been communicated to the Thessalonians? _____

18. (vs. 16-17) What blessing does Paul wish for the readers of the epistle? _____

CHAPTER THREE

PAUL’S REQUEST FOR PRAYER

Read 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3:1-5 _____ Check

1. (vs. 1) What is Paul’s first prayer request? _____

2. (vs. 2) What else does Paul ask prayer for? _____

3. (vs. 3) What is Paul confident the Lord will do? _____

4. (vs. 4) What is Paul confident of? _____

5. (vs. 5) What does Paul wish for the believers _____

WARNINGS AGAINST IDLENESS AND FINAL GREETINGS

Read 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3:6-18 _____ Check

- 6. (vs. 6) What command does Paul give the readers? _____

- 7. (vss. 7-8) What example did Paul and his companions set for the Thessalonians believers? _____

- 8. (vs. 9) Why did Paul and his companions work the way they did? _____

- 9. (vs. 10) What was the rule that Paul set for the Thessalonians? _____

- 10. (vs. 11) What report had Paul heard about some of the Thessalonians? _____

- 11. (vs. 12) What command does Paul give to those people? _____

- 12. (vs. 13) What should the readers not become weary of? _____

- 13. (vs. 14) How should the church deal with someone that ignores Paul's instructions? _____

- 14. (vs. 15) How should this person be regarded (counted – KJV)? _____

- 15. (vs. 16) What is Paul's wish for the believers? _____

- 16. (vs. 17) What was the distinguishing mark of Paul's letters? _____

- 17. (vs. 18) What final blessing does Paul give to the believers? _____

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