

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Second Coming Letters of Paul – Part 14

II Thessalonians – Part 1

I. Introduction: Today we continue our study through what are sometimes referred to as *“The Second Coming Letters of Paul.”* This refers to the two letters written to the Christians at Thessalonica. We now come to the second letter which is commonly referred to as Second Thessalonians. This letter is believed to have been written from Corinth around A.D. 51 or 52 and is one of the earliest letters, probably written within months after the first letter.¹ It is addressed to the church in the city of Thessalonica which Paul and Silas had planted only a short time before writing both of these letters. According to **Acts 17:1-9**, this church was established during Paul’s second missionary journey. Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews for three Sabbaths (**Acts 17:2**), but then was forced to escape to Berea.

II. The City of Thessalonica

- A. Founded in BC 315.
- B. The city was about 100 miles west of Philippi. Under the Romans, it has a population of about 200,000.
- C. It was a wealthy city, its population being Greek, and many well-to-do Romans and also Jewish merchants were attracted by the commercial advantages.
- D. It was the capital, political and commercial city of Northern Greece or Macedonia.
- E. The religion of the city was paganism, idolatry.
- F. In the city was a Synagogue of the Jews, having the Old Testament Scriptures and Gentile prostyles there also.

III. Purpose of the Letter.

- A. To commend them for their continued faithfulness in the midst of persecution.
- B. To give them more insight concerning events which will surround the second coming of the Lord Jesus.
- C. To admonish any who have ceased working due to wrong ideas about Christ’s return.

IV. Basic Outline of Second Thessalonians.

- A. Greeting and Opening – **1:1-2**.
- B. Encouragement and Admonition concerning the Lord’s Coming – **1:3-12**.
- C. The Day of the Lord and the Lawless One – **2:1-17**.
- D. Final Admonitions – **3:1-15**.
- E. Closing – **3:16-18**.

V. Exposition of Chapter One.

- A. **Verses 1-2 – “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”** – This is an almost identical greeting as was given by Paul in the opening of the first letter to the Thessalonians so some of the following will be familiar to some.
 1. **“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy...”** – Once again, we see that Paul didn’t work alone. These two men were an important part of his team. Paul is the actual author of the letter though Silvanus and Timothy may have contributed ideas. The most important thing to know is that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Author. (**II Timothy 3:16**).
 - a. **“Silvanus” (also known as Silas)** was a long and experienced companion of Paul. He traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey and was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail (**Acts 16:19-30**). He was also referred to as a prophet in **Acts 15:32**. When Paul first came to Thessalonica, Silas came with him (**Acts 17:1-9**). Therefore, the Thessalonians knew Silvanus.
 - b. **“Timothy”** was a resident of Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia (**Acts 16:1-3**). He was the son of a Greek father (**Acts 16:1**) and a Jewish mother named Eunice (**II Timothy 1:5**). As a child he had learned the Scriptures from his mother and grandmother (**II Timothy 1:5; 3:15**). Timothy was a trusted companion and associate of Paul, and he accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Paul referred to him as a **“son in the faith” (I Timothy 1:2)**. Paul had sent Timothy to the Thessalonians on a previous occasion (**I Thessalonians 3:2**).
 2. **“...To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ...”** – The word **“church”** referred to an assembly of people whether it was civil or religious. It literally means; **“those**

¹Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 2 Thessalonians* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2022), 2.

called out to assemble.” Paul specifies here that the “assembly” he’s referring to are those “...in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ...” In other words, those who are identified as being in relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many Scriptures regarding who we are and what we have “in Christ.”

3. “...Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – This is typical of Paul’s greetings to the churches he wrote to. The word “grace” means: “a favorable attitude toward someone or something”² When used as a salutation, it was a way of expressing greeting. It has the idea of expressing good will toward people. The word “peace” means: “a set of favorable circumstances involving peace and tranquility”³

- a. Regarding the phrase; “...God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”, First, Paul is expressing the fact that the Thessalonian believers had now been born into the family of God, having God as their Father. Secondly, we see that Paul is expressing that Jesus Christ is, indeed, Deity, co-equal with the Father. The word “Lord” here means: “one who exercises supernatural authority over mankind—‘Lord, Ruler, One who commands’”⁴ This is the same word commonly used to refer to God in the New Testament and for Yahweh (Jehovah) in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint).

B. Verse 3 - We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

1. Paul was thankful for the Thessalonians because two things were happening in their lives.

- a. “...your faith grows exceedingly...” – “Faith”, as it’s mentioned here, basically means: “firm persuasion, assurance or, firm conviction”⁵ So, Paul is commending these believers that they are becoming stronger in their convictions concerning their Christian faith. This seems to be a problem within Christianity today. Many Christians don’t have a desire to put in the effort to grow. The Bible, however, emphasizes the need for this (cf. II Corinthians 10:15 [“increased”]; Ephesians 4:14-15; Colossians 1:10 [“increasing”]; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18) Concerning the words, “grows exceedingly”, Thomas Constable writes:

“The Greek word translated “increasing abundantly,” *huperauxanei*, which Paul used to describe their faith, occurs only here in the New Testament. It means that their faith had grown abnormally, not just at a normal rate.”⁶

- b. “...the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other” – Love is the command of the New Covenant and is one of the primary ways the world knows that we are followers of Jesus Christ. (John 13:34-35; Romans 13:8-10) Grant Richison writes:

“The word ‘abounds’ is simply *more* [in quantity]. Sometimes this word has the idea of ‘superabundantly.’ When it comes to loving one another, we should have it in superabundance. We should not put bounds around it. We break the bounds when it comes to love. Not only did the Thessalonians faith grow but also their love grew in quantity.”⁷

C. Verse 4 – “So that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,”

1. “...we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God...” – This church was a remarkable church and became an example to other churches, especially in the midst of persecution.
2. “...for your patience and faith...” – The word “patience” means: “capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances—‘endurance’”⁸ (cf. I Peter 4:12-14).

“And this is a cause of our mentioning you with pride among the churches (assemblies) of God for your steadfastness (your unflinching endurance and patience) and your firm faith in the midst of all the persecutions and crushing distresses *and* afflictions under which you are holding up.”

II Thessalonians 1:4 – Amplified Bible

²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 298.

³Ibid., 246.

⁴Ibid., 138.

⁵*Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary*, William D. Mounce and Rick D. Bennett, Jr. (e-sword version 1993).

⁶Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 2 Thessalonians* (<http://www.sonlight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2022), 8.

⁷Grant Richison, *Verse by Verse through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006), 2 Th 1:3.

⁸Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, 307.