

Easy-to-Read Version

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2 Thessalonians

Paul probably wrote this letter only a few months after he wrote 1 Thessalonians. As in almost all of Paul's letters, this one also begins with thanksgiving to God for this church that he had started. Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers of their strong faith through hard times. He thanks God for them and all they have done because of their faith. And he tells them how happy he is that wherever he goes, he hears good things about them. He goes on to say that God is a just judge and will bring them relief. And God will also punish those who make them suffer.

This letter has stronger language than 1 Thessalonians when it deals with some of the same problems. Paul also explains more fully some things he had already taught the church in Thessalonica. And he again tells them to use his behaviour as an example to follow. Paul encourages them as they continue to suffer persecution.

The church in Thessalonica was also now dealing with some new and confusing false teaching. Some of it had to do with concerns about the future. Paul did not want the believers to be fooled or upset by this teaching. He feared that they might believe a false prophecy or teaching. And this might lead them to think that "the Day of the Lord" had already come. But Paul tells them in this letter that this is not true. Some other things must happen first. And Paul describes what they should look for. First, many more people will rebel against God.

Then, after some time, a powerful representative of Satan will appear. This "Man of Evil" will demand to be worshipped and will fool many people. But the Lord Jesus will finally return and destroy him. Paul prays that God will protect the Thessalonians in such difficult and confusing times. He also asks them to pray for him and his co-workers.

In the final section of the letter, Paul writes about something else that was causing problems in the church. Some believers were refusing to work. They wanted other believers to take care of them. These lazy people were becoming a burden on their church family. What they were doing was against Paul's teaching and his own example. It was even against the standards of their own Greek culture. Paul tells those who can work to work hard and support themselves. He says that if such people ignore these warnings, other members of the church should stay away from them.

In this second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul...

Thanks God for them and says God will bless them and punish their enemies (1:1-12)

Teaches them the truth about the coming "Day of the Lord" (2:1-15)

Prays again for them and asks for their prayers (2:16 – 3:5)

Warns against lazy and thoughtless behaviour (3:6-18)

1 Greetings from Paul, Silas and Timothy.

To the church in Thessalonica that belongs to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

³Brothers and sisters, we thank God for you always. And that's what we should do, because you give us good reason to be thankful: your faith is growing more and more. And the love that every one of you has for each other is also growing. ⁴So we tell the other churches of God how proud we are of you. We tell them how you patiently continue to be strong and have faith, even though you are being persecuted and are suffering many troubles.

God Will Make Things Right

⁵This is proof that God is right in his judgement. He wants you to be worthy of his kingdom. Your suffering is for that kingdom. ⁶God will do what is right. He will punish those who are causing you trouble. ⁷And he will bring relief to you who are troubled. He will bring it to you and to us when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven for all to see, together with his powerful angels. ⁸He will come with burning fire to punish those who don't know God—those who refuse to accept the Good News about our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with a destruction that never ends. They will not be allowed to be with the Lord but will be kept away from his great power. ¹⁰This will happen on the day when the Lord Jesus comes and receives honour among his holy people. He will be admired by all who have believed. And this includes you because you believed what we told you.

¹¹That is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to help you live the good way he wanted when he chose you. We pray that he will give you his power to do all the good you want to do and to perform the works that come from your

faith. ¹²Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honoured because of you, and you will be honoured because of him. This can happen only by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evil Things Will Happen

2 Brothers and sisters, we have something to say about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to talk to you about that time when we will meet together with him. ²Don't let yourselves be easily upset or worried if you hear that the day of the Lord has already come. Someone might say that this idea came from us—in something the Spirit told us, or in something we said or in a letter we wrote. ³Don't be fooled by anything they might say. That day of the Lord will not come until the turning away from God happens. And that day will not come until the Man of Evil appears, the one who is sure to be destroyed.* ⁴He will stand against and put himself above everything that people worship or think is worthy of worship. He will even go into God's Temple† and sit there, claiming that he is God.

⁵I told you more than once when I was there that all these things would happen. Remember? ⁶And you know what is keeping this Man of Evil from coming. He will not be allowed to appear until the right time comes. ⁷The secret power of evil is already working in the world now. But there is one who is holding back that secret power. And he will continue to hold it back until he is taken out of the way. ⁸Then that Man of Evil will appear. But the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath that comes from his mouth. The Lord will come in a way that

***2:3 to be destroyed** Or “to cause destruction”. Literally, “is the son of destruction”.

†**2:4 Temple** Probably the Temple in Jerusalem. See Temple in the Word List.

everyone will see, and that will be the end of the Man of Evil.

⁹When that Man of Evil comes, it will be the work of Satan. He will come with great power, and he will do all kinds of false miracles, signs and wonders. ¹⁰The Man of Evil will use every kind of evil to fool those who are on their way to destruction. They will be lost because they refused to love the true message about Jesus[‡] and be saved. ¹¹So God will cause them to be fooled and to believe what is false. ¹²They will all be condemned because they did not believe the true message and because they enjoyed doing evil.

You Are Chosen for Salvation

¹³Brothers and sisters, you are people the Lord loves. And we always thank God for you. That's what we should do, because God chose you to be some of the first people[§] to be saved. You were saved by the Spirit making you God's holy people and by trusting in the true message about Jesus. ¹⁴God chose you to have that salvation. He chose you by using the Good News that we told you. You were chosen so that you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So, brothers and sisters, stand strong and continue to believe the teachings we gave you when we were there and by letter.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father will comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us and gave us through his grace a wonderful hope and comfort that has no end.

Pray for Us

3 And now, brothers and sisters, pray for us. Pray that the Lord's teaching will continue to spread quickly. And pray that people will give honour to that teaching, the same as happened with you. ²And pray that we will be protected from crooked and evil people. Not everyone believes in the Lord, you know.

³But the Lord is faithful. He will give you strength and protect you from the Evil One.[§] ⁴The Lord gives us confidence that you are doing what we told you and that you will continue to do it. ⁵We pray that the Lord will cause you to feel God's love and remember Christ's patient endurance.

Everyone's Duty to Work

⁶Brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ we tell you to stay away from any believer who refuses to work. People who refuse to work are not following the teaching that we gave them. ⁷You yourselves know that you should live like we do. We were not lazy when we were with you. ⁸We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked and worked so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We worked night and day. ⁹We had the right to ask you to help us. But we worked to take care of ourselves so that we would be an example for you to follow. ¹⁰When we were with you, we gave you this rule: "Whoever will not work should not be allowed to eat."

¹¹We hear that some people in your group refuse to work. They are doing nothing except being busy in the lives of others. ¹²Our instruction to them is

[‡]2:10 *true message about Jesus* Literally, "truth". Also in verse 13.

[§]2:13 *to be ... people* Some Greek copies have "from the beginning".

[§]3:3 *the Evil One* Or "evil". See Matt. 6:13.

to stop bothering others, to start working and earn their own food. It is by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are urging them to do this. ¹³Brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.

¹⁴If there are some there who refuse to do what we tell you in this letter, remember who they are. Don't associate with them. Then maybe they will feel ashamed. ¹⁵But don't treat them as enemies. Warn them as fellow believers.

Final Words

¹⁶We pray that the Lord of peace will give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all.

¹⁷Here's my greeting in my own handwriting—Paul. I do this in all my letters to show they are from me. This is the way I write.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.