

2 THESSALONIANS

(All notes by Andrew Lincoln unless otherwise indicated)

- 1) Written shortly after 1 Thess. But Abraham Smith believes that cumulative evidence indicates that Paul did not write it.: a) limited diction, b) cooler tone, c) different use of eschatology (p. 683 NIB), d) attempt to authenticate itself from other spurious letters (3:7).
- 2) 2:1-8 – Apparently some of the Thessalonians were beginning to doubt Paul's doctrine of the Second Coming. Others were becoming so obsessed with it that they were giving up their jobs and not working. So Paul stresses that Jesus **will** return, Vss 1:7,8, but it will not be immediately and the essential prelude will be the temporary triumph of evil, Vss 2:3,4. Reminiscent of Daniel's reference to Antiochus IV, Dan 11:30 -- "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself above every god." The parallel is the success of the Maccabees over the Seleucids and Antiochus IV. Ezekiel describes such a last battle, Ezek. 38:1,2 -- "O man, face towards Gog in the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him. Say, 'These are the words of the Lord God.'" Paul refers to the final enemy in 2 Cor. 6:15 -- "Can Christ agree with Belial, or a believer join with an unbeliever?" Jewish legend-makers gave the name Belial to the final adversary of God. Math 24:24 speaks of false Christs -- "Imposters will come claiming to be messiahs or prophets." In 1 John 2:18 -- "Children, this is the last hour! You were told that an antichrist was to come. Well, many antichrists have already appeared, proof to us that this is indeed the last hour." The early Christians expected Jesus to return with angels -- see Mat. 13:49, 25:31.
- 3) 2:3 -- The "lawless one," the "one doomed to destruction," is the "end-time tyrant." Scholars link him to Antiochus IV (150 years before Christ?), or Pompey (who captured Jerusalem in 63 BCE), or Caligula (who threatened to set up statues of himself in Jerusalem). But see note at John 17:12.
- 4) 2:6-11 -- The "restraining" force is 1) Rome, in Paul's day, Nero. Or 2) angelic powers binding Satan. Or 3) God, knowing that the end times cannot come until all nations have heard of Jesus. Augustine admitted that he really had no idea what these vv mean! /// V. 11 – God as a deceiver? Robert Jewett says that the delusion that God brings is not the cause of the rejection of the gospel, but the result. God grants the possibility for persons to be subject to evil because of their failure to believe the truth.
- 5) 3:10 -- Resonates with Genesis 3:19, not found in any of Paul's undisputed letters.
- 6) 3:17 -- The fact that the writer felt he needed to authenticate the letter gives most scholars the idea that he did **not** write it. Also it replaces the typical Pauline personal tone. But Abraham Smith: "The authentication remarks could help a beleaguered church needing to make sure that the beliefs and behavior it has endorsed are appropriate as it awaits its Lord's revelation."