

**STUDIES IN  
I AND II THESSALONIANS**

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# **STUDIES IN I AND II THESSALONIANS**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1. NATURE OF THE SITUATION AT THESSALONICA**

- a. Thessalonica was the key city of the Macedonian region. The main highway of Macedonia passed through it, its harbor was the center of the shipping industry linking it to the rest of the Mediterranean world, and it was also the main means of contact between Rome and these eastern provinces.**
- b. Although it did not have the pure Greek cultural background that characterized Corinth and other cities of the southern region of Achaia, it was a very advanced city with a population perhaps as high as 200,000 people.**
- c. The absence of a pure Greek cultural background actually proved to be an aid in the spread of the Gospel there and in the other cities of Macedonia, for there was less reliance upon human philosophical thought in the hearts of the people and more attention to the simple truths of the Gospel. Thus, the people there had little of the pride and arrogance about their culture that characterized the Corinthians.**
- d. Although the majority of the people were native Greeks, its population included a broad mixture of Romans and Orientals as well as a sizable number of Jews. The Jews had a large synagogue there with considerable influence.**
- e. The moral standards of the Thessalonians were no better than those of any other cities in the region, for the pagan religion practiced there leaned toward immoral practices in their forms of worship. The temptations that Satan would use to confront the Christians would therefore be just as serious and as destructive to Christian life and conduct as they would be in any other city. However, In contrast to the Corinthians, the Macedonians took a firm stand against these temptations and lived lives that brought holiness and God's approval and blessing on them.**

- f. **It is one of the few cities of the Greek and Roman empires that has retained its identity even down to today. Today it is a thriving city of more than 300,000 people.**

## **2. HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA**

### **a. The History of Paul's First Two Missionary Endeavors.**

- 1) **Paul had begun his FIRST missionary journey in 45 A.D. when the Church in Antioch had been told by the Holy Spirit to set Paul and Barnabas apart for the special work of God that wanted to accomplish through their ministry. SEE: Acts 13:1-3. This journey seemed to last about two years.**

- a) **Paul and Barnabas had already labored for some time in Antioch after Paul had spent perhaps as long as 14 years in Tarsus after his conversion and Barnabas had gone there to seek him out. SEE: Acts 11:22-30; Galatians 2:1-3.**

- b) **On this first missionary journey, they went as far as the areas of Galatia where they ministered briefly in a number of cities, with God bringing spiritual results in all of them.**

- c) **However, they were forced to flee from most of them due to persecution and had little time to disciple the new believers and help build them up in the faith. They still felt led to appoint elders/pastors over the young churches as they passed back through each city. This lack of discipling/building up later led to the Galatian heresy of Galatians, chapter 1-4 in 48 A.D.**

- 2) **In between Paul's first and second missionary journeys, Paul not only wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he gave strong teaching on the subject of the heresy that had gotten into the churches there about following the Law of Moses, but he and Barnabas also made a special trip in 50 A.D. down to Jerusalem to defend their efforts in winning and teaching the Gentiles. SEE: Acts, chapter 15.**

- a) **Some of the Jerusalem brethren wanted the Gentiles to come under the Law and had even sent some of their representatives to**

**Antioch to seek to spread this false teaching. This teaching had to be refuted strongly and an agreement had to be reached with the brethren in the Jerusalem Church.**

- b) A clear understanding was reached, both about the fact that the Gentiles were not under the Law and also that they were not to offend the unsaved Jews in every place. Clear instructions were sent that Paul was to use in every place where Gentiles were to be reached that listed four things the Gentiles were to avoid doing.**
- 3) In 51 A.D., Paul began his SECOND missionary journey, taking with him SILAS who had come back with Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem following their meeting with the leaders of the Jerusalem Church in 50 A.D. Their departure from Antioch followed the bitter controversy that Paul and Barnabas had had over whether or not Mark could also accompany them on this second journey, and the parting of their ways.**
  - a) Paul and Silas traveled first to the area of Galatia where he spent some time encouraging and building up the churches in that area. SEE: Acts 16:4, 5. While there, he also enlisted young TIMOTHY as a companion on that second missionary journey. SEE: Acts 16:1-3. At this time, Timothy could have been as young as 18-20 years of age, for in I Timothy 4:12, written about 14 years later (64 A.D.), Paul still speaks of Timothy's "youth/youthfulness."**
  - b) Then they traveled to the western side of Asia where they attempted to go into Mysia and Bithynia but were prevented by the Holy Spirit. This brought them to the city of Troas where they waited for God's further leading for them.**
  - c) In Troas Paul received the "Macedonian Vision" (SEE: Acts 16:9, 10) that called them to go to the northern European area of Macedonia to evangelize the people there.**
  - d) They immediately left Asia and traveled to Europe, reaching first the people of PHILIPPI with the Gospel. SEE: Acts 16:11-40. There were many converts there, together with much opposition that included having Paul cast into prison where the jailor and his family were converted. SEE: Acts 16:19-39. Though they had to**

- e) **From Philippi, they went next to the CITY OF THESSALONICA. SEE: Acts 17:1-9.**
- 1)) **From Paul's evangelistic efforts in that city, both in the synagogue of the Jews and also with the Gentiles, there were many converts from among the Jews and Gentiles.**
  - 2)) **The opposition of the Jewish leaders forced Paul to leave the City of Thessalonica very quickly, but there also he left behind the beginnings of a new church.**
  - 3)) **When Paul left Thessalonica, he left behind Silas and Timothy. SEE: 16:13, 14; 17:15; 18:5. Their purpose was to teach the new believers more thoroughly and to see to the establishment of a church there.**
- f) **From Thessalonica, Paul went to BEREIA. We hear of no church being started there, nor were any letters recorded as being written to the believers there, but Acts 16:10-12 records that many in the synagogue of the Jews and outside trusted the Lord and we assume that they continued to follow Him. As had been true in Philippi and Thessalonica, these converts included both Jews and Gentiles.**
- g) **From Berea, Paul was sent down to ATHENS (SEE: Acts 17:15-34) where he not only spent time preaching the Gospel in the synagogue and in the market place, but he also preached the Gospel to the philosophers and idol worshippers there in their famous meeting place, the Aeropagus. He preached concerning the True God and His salvation through Christ. There were a few converts (vs. 34).**
- h) **From Athens, Paul went to Corinth for an extended ministry of about 18 months both among the Jews and Gentiles. It seems that a strong and well taught church was established in that City.**

- 1)) We note from I and II Corinthians that the Corinthian Church later turned into a very carnal and rebellious church in spite of the teaching of Paul and the following ministries of Apollos and Peter. As noted before, they were strongly influenced by their pride in their pure Greek culture and standing in the Roman world.**
- 2)) In his two epistles to the Corinthians, Paul had to very strongly deal with them in their arrogant and rebellious ways. He actually had to deal with twelve different problems in his first epistle to them, and then had to reinforce that teaching in his second epistle.**
  - i) Finally, Paul crossed back over the Aegean Sea to Ephesus on the S.W. corner of Asia, as he was on his way to Antioch, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca). He ministered in Ephesus very briefly before returning again to greet the Jerusalem brethren and then to report back to the Church at Antioch.**
  - j) After he left, Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca) stayed in Ephesus and taught Apollos who was zealous for the Lord but only had the teaching of John the Baptist to guide him. They confirmed to him the full teaching concerning the PERSON and completed WORK of the Lord so that he could teach and preach more accurately.**
- b. The Follow Up Work of the Third Missionary Journey of Paul**
  - 1) Although Paul mainly concentrated his efforts during this third missionary journey in the City of Ephesus, he had also done follow up work both in Galatia (SEE: Acts 16:1-5), where he had spent his first missionary journey, and in Eastern Europe, where he had established work during his second missionary journey. SEE: I Thessalonians 3:1-6 where it records the work of Silas and Timothy following Paul's departure from Macedonia to go down to Athens.**
  - 2) From Ephesus he wrote two epistles to the Thessalonians in 52 and 53 A.D. From the same city, he also wrote the two epistles to the Corinthians in 54 and 55 A.D.**

- 3) In addition, he also sent workers, Erastus and Timothy, back to Macedonia to continue to teach them and to build up the work of the church. SEE: Acts 19:22.**
- 4) Following this further ministry among them by his fellow workers, Paul himself went back to Macedonia and Greece with a number of companions (SEE: Acts 20:1-6) to minister among the believers in the churches there.**
- 5) Therefore, in spite of the distance from Ephesus to Macedonia, Paul maintained a very close tie with them in encouraging them and building them up in the faith.**

### **3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA**

- a. Both from the initial efforts of Paul on his second missionary journey, and from the follow-up labors of his co-workers, we note that strong spiritual churches were established both in Philippi and in Thessalonica. We note that all three of the epistles Paul wrote to these churches (Philippians and I and II Thessalonians) highly commend their spirituality and their faithfulness to the Lord and to His work. For instance, the first two chapters of I Thessalonians are strong in Paul's commendation of them, with most of these two chapters being very positive in nature.**
- b. These believers did not have the philosophical Greek cultural background that surrounded the believers in Corinth. In Corinth, this strong Greek cultural background caused them to have sinful pride and a strong attitude of arrogance that hindered their spiritual growth and commitment to the Lord, but this influence was lacking in Macedonia.**
- c. From the beginning, the believers in both of these Macedonian cities totally committed themselves to the Lord and followed Him with all their hearts. They became the shining examples of strong faith and Christian conduct to churches both in Asia and Europe. We note this in all three of the epistles written to them.**
- d. In II Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9, Paul also notes their sacrificial spirit on behalf of others as they gave to help the Jerusalem**

**Christians in a crisis that arose there. When he speaks of “those of Macedonia,” he is speaking of the believers in those particular churches. In fact, he uses this sacrificial spirit to shame the believers in Corinth who were selfish and who had permitted an entire year to pass without any significant response to the need in Jerusalem. The believers in Corinth would not appreciate the use of the example of the Macedonians for they would tend to look down on them, but Paul’s use of this example brought the desired result.**

#### **4. PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA**

- a. In both of these epistles, their main problem seemed to be a lack of clear understanding of the COMING OF THE LORD, both concerning the events and significance of the RAPTURE and also the coming of the Lord to rule and reign on the earth.**
- b. With the Corinthian Church, the Church in Rome and some of the churches of Asia, Paul had had to deal strongly with the problem of “diversity”, which was the mixing together in the body of believers of many different kinds of people. These included Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves, rich and poor and high and low class people. The Thessalonian Church would also have some of the same kinds of diversity but this problem does not seem to trouble the Thessalonians.**
- c. Another problem was that of carrying out the discipline of those who either had gotten into some kind of false practice (SEE: II Thessalonians 3:14, 15) or were a disturbing example to the other believers in the church. SEE: II Thessalonians 3:6, 10, 11.**
  - 1) Some of these caused trouble, or were too lazy to work and support themselves or were spreading gossip and slander.**
  - 2) While discipline was to be done in love with possible restoration (SEE: II Corinthians 2:4-11; Galatians 6:1; II Thessalonians 3:15), it was important to rid the church of those who were acting unspiritually in their relationship with the Lord and with other believers. SEE ALSO: I Corinthians, chapter 5; Titus 3:10, 11.**

- d. While there are words of strong advice for spiritual living in both epistles, these do not seem to point to any serious spiritual problem in the church. Rather, they are instructions for proper spiritual walk before God and man to those who are already obedient.
- e. We also note that, in both epistles to the Thessalonians, Paul shares several benedictions with them wishing for the blessing of God on them and encouraging them to go on faithfully for the Lord. He had used benedictions in other epistles, but not to this extent. SEE: I Thessalonians 3:11, 12; 5:23; II Thessalonians 2:15, 17; 3:5; 3:16.

## **THE STUDY OF I THESSALONIANS**

### **INTRODUCTION TO I THESSALONIANS**

#### **1. THE AUTHOR OF I THESSALONIANS**

- a. The style of writing and the use of language, when compared with other epistles that he wrote, certifies that this epistle was written by Paul. Even when dictated, the style and language would not change.
- b. It is also true that Paul would have been the only one to have had a strong reason for writing such an epistle. He was the first evangelist there and had established the church that resulted from those labors.
- c. The use of his name in the introduction and the numerous personal references he cites also prove that Paul was the author.

#### **2. THE PLACE OF THE WRITING OF I THESSALONIANS**

- a. Since Paul spent most of this third missionary journey in Ephesus, there seems to be no doubt that that he wrote both of these epistles to the Thessalonians and also his two epistles to the Corinthians from this city.
- b. It was also from Ephesus that Paul later sent Erastus and Timothy back to Thessalonica to observe their work and encourage them,

**and then he himself departed from Ephesus at the end of his stay there to return personally to Macedonia for a visit to each of the cities where he had first ministered on his second missionary journey.**

### **3. THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF I THESSALONIANS**

- a. Since this letter was written from Ephesus on Paul's third missionary journey and his stay there began very early in this journey, which began in 52 A.D., it seems that I Thessalonians was one of the very earliest of his epistles. Only Galatians, written in 48 A.D., while Paul was still in Antioch and before he went to Jerusalem to the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, to correct the error of the Judaizers concerning the place of the Law of Moses in the lives of New Testament believers, would precede this epistle.**
- b. It seems likely, therefore, that I Thessalonians was written as early as 52 A.D.**

### **4. THE MAJOR EMPHASIS AND THEMES OF I THESSALONIANS**

- a. In contrast to many of his epistles, one of the main themes of this epistle is his desire to strongly commend and encourage them because of their faith and the strong testimony that they had maintained since first being evangelized on his second missionary journey. A large part of both chapters one and two are devoted to this message of commendation.**
- b. Both in this epistle and in II Thessalonians, written a year later, Paul also puts great emphasis on the Second Coming of the Lord. He deals with fears and worries about the resurrection of the dead and also the basic facts of the Coming of the Lord to rule and reign.**
- c. He also puts emphasis upon his fervent desire that they would not falter in their faith and stand for the Lord and teaches them further about that. There was always the danger that either at that time or later there would be such faltering in their faith and stand for the Lord. The presence of this danger is seen in the Ephesian Church that was faithful in Paul's time but later changed as they lost their "first love." SEE: Revelation 2:1-7.**

## **5. THE OUTLINE OF I THESSALONIANS**

### **KEEPING A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN**

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1:1</b>
<b>II. KEEPING A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN</b>	<b>1:2-5:24</b>
<b>A. The Known Spiritual Testimony of the Worthy Walk of the Thessalonians</b>	<b>1:2-10</b>
<b>B. Paul's Example Before Them of a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>2:1-12</b>
<b>C. Paul's Joy at Their Imitation of His Worthy Walk</b>	<b>2:13-20</b>
<b>D. Their Proof of Having a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>3:1-10</b>
<b>E. Paul's Benedictory Prayer For a Spiritual Deepening of Their Worthy Walk</b>	<b>3:11-13</b>
<b>F. Holiness in Life as a Requirement and Proof of a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>4:1-8</b>
<b>G. The Spiritual Goals of a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>4:9-12</b>
<b>H. The Future Hope of Those With a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>4:13-18</b>
<b>I. Christ's Coming As An Incentive to a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>5:1-11</b>
<b>J. Their Respect For Leadership as Further Proof Of a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>5:12, 13</b>
<b>K. Paul's Final Exhortations For a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>5:14-22</b>
<b>L. Paul's Final Benedictory Prayer For the Complete Fulfillment Of the Goals of a Worthy Walk</b>	<b>5:23, 24</b>
<b>III. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>5:25-28</b>

# **STUDY OF THE TEXT OF I THESSALONIANS**

## **KEEPING A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN.**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

**1:1**

- a. Paul first briefly introduces himself and his two companions, Timothy and Silvanus. Many believe that this man Silvanus is the same as the SILAS who had come from the Jerusalem Church to Antioch, and who, after Paul's dispute with Barnabas over Mark, then had accompanied Paul on the second missionary journey. This view would make sense, for Silvanus is mentioned in a number of different passages. SEE: II Corinthians 1:19; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:1; and I Peter 5:12.**
- b. We note that, in introducing himself, Paul does not feel the need to assert the authority of his Apostleship as he had done in many other Epistles. These believers are very spiritual and there is no need for him to prove anything about himself or the authority God had given him. The same would be true in the Epistle to the Philippians (and II Thessalonians) where he is also writing to very spiritual believers.**
- c. In naming the addressees, we note that he speaks of them being IN the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together, putting both the Father and the Son on the same level as being God and equal with each other in the Godhead. SEE: Matthew 28:19; John 5:23; 10:30; II Corinthians 13:14.**
- d. He closes this introductory verse with the simple blessing on them of desiring for them God's grace (sustaining strength) and peace (of God in daily life). He uses this same blessing in introducing many of his epistles.**

### **II. KEEPING A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN**

**1:2-5:24**

#### **A. The Known Spiritual Testimony of the Worthy Walk of the Thessalonians**

**1:2-10**

1. **He opens this passage with a prayer of rejoicing for all that they have shown in their walk with the Lord. 1:2-4**
  - a. **He remembers their spiritual qualities as he prays: 1:3**
    - 1) **“Your work of FAITH.” This would not just refer to the faith they had to be saved, but would deal with the fact that the WORK they did for God had evidence of strong faith and trust in the Lord. The Lord rewarded that faith.**
    - 2) **“Your labor of LOVE.” This could refer either to the approach and attitude of their labor for THE LORD, that it was done because of their deep love for Him (SEE: II Corinthians 5:14); OR it could refer to their committal and devotion to the TASK that the Lord had given them; OR it could refer to the love that they manifested toward the PEOPLE they were trying to reach; OR it could refer to the fact that they worked together as BRETHREN in love.**
    - 3) **“Your patience/stedfastness of HOPE in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Their faith in Him has given them a strong HOPE both for the present and for the future.**
      - a) **It is not only hope for eternal life and all that that will bring in the future, but it is also hope in their relationship with Him, His care over them and the value of the results that will come from their labors for Him. It is an unchanging motivation for them.**
      - b) **From the beginning, they have steadfastly held to this hope that motivates them and causes them to work faithfully for the Lord.**

**\*\*We note from I Corinthians 13:8-13, that this combination of FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE would be essential during the entire Church Age, but that the temporary gifts of Tongues and Prophecy would pass away during the Church Age because they would have fulfilled their purpose at a certain point in time (100-150 A.D.???)**

**\*\*In addition to I Corinthians 13, we also note that Paul speaks of this combination of FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE in the first section of Colossians SEE: Colossians 1:3-8. We see FAITH AND LOVE mentioned together in II Thessalonians 1:3 and Philemon, vs. 5.**

- b. He remembers their special selection by God in being chosen to be reached and won for Christ. 1:4**
  - 1) In the introduction, we discussed the unusual way that God had called Paul away from his very important work in Asia to cross the Aegean Sea and begin work in an area of the empire with which he would not be familiar. It would be some time before he would continue serious evangelism in western Asia.**
    - a) In this calling, God led him specifically to go into the area of Macedonia to evangelize in the cities of Philippi, Berea and Thessalonica.**
    - b) These were cities that he might not naturally have gone to since they were not in the center of the Greek culture. On a purely human level, he might have been more attracted to the cities of the south, in Achaia, where the challenge might have seemed greater.**
  - 2) God Himself had chosen that it should be this way so that these people would be reached with the Gospel, their churches established and their lives spiritually prepared to follow the Lord completely before any great persecutions would break out under the Romans that would hinder such evangelism from ever taking place.**
- 2. He introduces his own spiritual qualities that had been used by God to help them believe and follow the Lord as he worked among them. 1:5**
  - a. In these two verses he gives a very brief review of the testimony that he had left behind concerning the nature and the conduct of his ministry among them. In chapter 2, vs. 1-12, he expands on this**

**testimony at great length, examining all the aspects of it that had affected both their salvation and their faithful walk with the Lord.**

- b. His purpose in sharing this testimony is not to exalt himself but to show them that all that he is and has done has been a good example to them. It is an example that they can follow in modeling their own lives as they follow the Lord.**
- c. He reminds them of three particular SPIRITUAL QUALITIES that he had consistently manifested while working among them.**
  - 1) When he shared the Gospel with them, he did not come to them with just words or clever arguments. Rather, he came to them in the POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**
    - a) This means that he was given the message itself by the Holy Spirit to share with them and was given the Holy Spirit's power to share it with them.**
    - b) The Holy Spirit also affirmed the message (SEE: John 16:13-15), and moved upon them to accept it by convicting them of their spiritual needs before God and moving upon their hearts to completely respond to it. SEE ALSO: John 16:7-11; Acts 2:1-40.**
  - 2) He had also exhibited complete ASSURANCE/CONVICTION concerning the message he was sharing with them and his sacrificial commitment to it.**
    - a) In his background, he had been a Christ hater and a violent opposer of the Lord and the Truth of the Gospel.**
    - b) When he was saved, however (SEE: Acts, chapter 9; Philippians 3:4-6, 7-9-14), he knew that this was the Truth and left everything he had ever stood upon to trust Christ and to follow Him with all his heart. His ministry and testimony, both before Jews and Gentiles, completely reflected that.**
  - 3) Though he does not fully discuss this until chapter 2:1-12, his MANNER OF LIFE/CONDUCT before them in every way proved the calling, presence, blessing and leading of the Lord in**

his life and his total commitment to Him. He thus was able to maintain an unblemished testimony before them.

3. He then continues with his commendation of them. 1:6-10
  - a. They became “imitators” of Paul and the Lord as they received the Truth in much joy of the Holy Spirit even as they endured much persecution for His sake. 1:6
  - b. They became examples to the believers in every part of that eastern side of Europe through the way they themselves received the Word and followed the Lord. We note that he includes the believers in Achaia whose approach and devotion to the Lord might not have been as worthy as those in Thessalonica. 1:7
  - c. The Word of God has gone forth from them to every region even beyond Macedonia and Achaia. This means that they aggressively wanted to share their faith with others. It could also have to do with the fact that their faith was so strong and their testimony so outstanding that people everywhere have heard of it. 1:8
  - d. People everywhere are testifying to the way they had responded to the Gospel and how they turned to God from idols in order to serve Him alone. 1:9
  - e. They are not only completely serving Him, but they are also waiting for the Coming of the Lord from heaven. SEE: 4:13-18

**B. Paul’s Example Before Them of a Worthy Walk 2:1-12**

**\*\* WE NOTE:** The purity and blamelessness of the testimony and the example that he has left behind in every place is very important to Paul. We see this in many of his epistles such as II Corinthians and Philippians. Even though some like the Corinthians were filled with bitterness and criticism of him, Paul could prove that this attitude of theirs was without justification and that he had actually conducted himself in a Godly and blameless way while with them.

1. His coming to them and the manner of his coming to them was not in vain. This means that it had a valuable purpose and brought

**forth valid spiritual results. These results are evident in the spirituality of the church. 2:1**

- 2. Even though he had already gone through terrible sufferings in Philippi and was facing similar opposition in Thessalonica, Paul could testify that he was bold in his proclamation of the Gospel Truth to them. This means that he had the spiritual courage to be willing to suffer even more if he could fulfill his calling and purpose in being a witness to the Gentiles. 2:2**
- 3. He was also completely honest with them in the exhortation that he gave them to believe as they heard the Gospel. He could say that he conducted himself as a man of absolute holiness and integrity so that they would never doubt his word or his character. 2:3**
- 4. As one entrusted by God to proclaim His Word, Paul proclaimed his message with the goal of pleasing God in everything rather than just pleasing men. Men, in fact, might disagree with what he proclaimed, but as long as God approved of it that was all that mattered to Paul. SEE: II Corinthians 5:9 2:4**
- 5. He never came preaching using speech just to please them nor was he in any way greedy for personal gain in coming among them and proclaiming the Truth. 2:5**
- 6. He never sought glory from men or desired that he would receive the praise and honor that men could give even though he had the position of an apostle of Christ and had the right to stand in the authority of that position. 2:6**
- 7. His approach to them was a tender and loving one rather than a strong assertive one. He compares himself with a nursing MOTHER holding tenderly her baby as he describes his own manner in working among them. 2:7**
- 8. They were so dear to him that he would gladly have not only given them the Gospel but would also have given up his own life for them and for their salvation. Compare: Romans 9:1-3 which gives a picture of Paul's deep burden for the Jews and the sacrifices that he would have been willing to make for their salvation. 2:8**

9. While among them, he supported himself so that he would not in any way be a burden to them 2:9
10. He has them remember that his life and labor among them was devout, upright and blameless. This would cause them to respect and heed the message that he proclaimed among them without being distracted by anything wrong in his life or by using anything found wrong in his life as an excuse for rejecting. 2:10
11. He was not only like a nursing mother while laboring with them (SEE: vs. 7), but he was also like a FATHER to them in encouraging and pleading with them to accept the message that he was sharing with them. 2:11
12. His GOAL in working among them was not only that they should receive the message that he was proclaiming and be saved, but that they would also would walk in a manner that was worthy of the God who called them after they had been saved. He desired complete results in their lives that would PROVE that they had truly come into relationship with the Lord. 2:12

**C. Paul's Joy at Their Imitation of His Worthy Walk 2:13-20**

1. He gives special thanks to God that when they received the Word of God they immediately accepted it as the Word of God itself rather than the word of men. Even though the message was both new and strange to them when Paul proclaimed it, they had the discernment to recognize its true source and responded to it and followed it with all their hearts. 2:13
2. In their imitation of the churches of God in Judea, they were willing to endure the same persecutions from their own countrymen in Thessalonica that the Judean Christians had endured from the Jews from the beginning of the Gospel ministry. Those Jews both killed the Lord and sought to destroy His followers. God will surely punish those persecutors for all they did. 2:14-16
3. Paul had always been with them in spirit even though the distances between them were often very great. He now speaks of his deep

**desire and eagerness to see and be with them again. His plans to do so before this time had been hindered by the oppositions of Satan himself. 2:17, 18**

- 4. At the coming of the Lord, Paul testifies that these Thessalonians will be his main exhibit to show before the Lord and they will be his main source of joy and exultation. He can exhibit them to the Lord without any hesitation and the Lord Himself will approve of this result of Paul's ministry. SEE: I Corinthians 3:12-15 where Paul speaks of the testing by the Lord of everything. 2:19, 20**
- D. Their Further Proof of Having a Worthy Walk 3:1-10**
- 1. Their deep burden for Paul in his afflictions and the danger that it might affect their faith and trust. 3:1-5**
    - a. Paul is deeply grateful that they have a loving concern for the afflictions that he is undergoing. Not every church would share the same burden, and some might even take those afflictions as something he deserves or even work to make their impact worse. SEE: Philippians 1:15-17. He later commends the Philippians for the same heart affection and loving care for him. SEE: Philippians, chapter 4.**
    - b. He is concerned that the afflictions that he is enduring will cause them to doubt the way God works or even their faith itself. He assures them that, while he needs their encouragement to go through them, these have come to him in God's will (3:3).**
    - c. Because of his concern for the way these afflictions might affect them as the "TEMPTER" uses them to instill doubts, he had sent Timothy back to encourage and strengthen them.**
  - 2. The encouraging report of Timothy concerning their unchanging faith and love in their concern for Paul. 3:6-8**
    - a. We note that Timothy, who had begun this missionary journey with Paul as a very young and inexperienced Christian (SEE: Acts 16:1-3), now is entrusted by Paul with major responsibility. We will**

see the same thing nearly ten years later when Paul leaves Timothy in Ephesus to deal with those who are teaching false teaching. SEE: I Timothy 1:3-10. This speaks of his rapid growth in the Lord and the maturity he has gained.

- b. The report from Timothy assures Paul that their burden for him is just as strong, but that it has not hindered them from strongly going on in their faith and Christian walk.
- c. Paul also assures them that their continued strong stand for the faith means more to him than anything else that they might do.

**3. Paul's great burden and desire to see them                      3:9, 10**

- a. In chapter 1:2-4, Paul had prayed for them prayers of thanksgiving for the strong testimony they have exhibited about their FAITH, LOVE and HOPE. Everything in that prayer was positive with no indication yet of a sign of any significant need that they have.
- b. In these verses, 3:9, 10, Paul's is still full of joy concerning them and giving thanks for them, but with the burden that he might be able to come and be with them and personally help to build them up further in the faith. As far as they have come in the faith and as strong as their testimony has been, there is still room for further growth in the Lord and in their faith. SEE: II Peter 3:18.

**E. Paul's Benedictory Prayer For a Spiritual  
Deepening of Their Worthy Walk    3:11-13**

- 1. The burden of this prayer is not for the faith that is the foundation of their relationship with the Lord, but rather for their WALK in that faith.
  - a. He first prays for their growth in their LOVE FOR OTHERS, not only in the church itself but also for those outside the church. Paul is their example in this. He will continue this subject in chapter 4:9, 10.
  - b. He also introduces the subject of HOLINESS, a subject that will be further developed in chapter 4:1-8.

- 1) We note that the subject of **HOLINESS** in this passage emphasizes their preparation for the coming of the Lord in the Rapture. They are to be blameless and fully ready for this coming.
  - 2) There is danger that some will not take seriously this appearing before the Lord and then will be ashamed, because of their lack of holiness in their lives, to be with Him when He appears to take them up. **SEE: I John 2:28, concerning those who “shrink back.”**
2. We note that this prayer follows the form of a **BENEDICTION** such as we often use to close our worship services. In a benediction, it is not only a prayer to the Father but also an expression of a fervent personal desire/wish/hope for the ones with whom it is shared. **SEE: Romans 16:25-27; Ephesians 6:23, 24; I Thessalonians 5:23; II Thessalonians 2:16, 17; 3:3, 16.**

**F. Holiness in Life as a Requirement and Proof of a Worthy Walk**

**4:1-8**

1. This subject of **HOLINESS** is specifically and extensively dealt with in a number of different passages. **SEE: Romans, chapter 6; I Corinthians 6:12-20; I Peter 1:13-16; I John 2:15-17.** The standards of it are taught in many more passages. **SEE: Galatians, chapters 5, 6; Ephesians, chapters 4-6; Colossians, chapters 3, 4.**
2. In this section in chapter 4, he opens the subject by pointing out that it is the major means of pleasing God. In dealing with the Thessalonians, he is not doubting either their desires or the quality of their walk before the Lord, but he is emphasizing that they are never to be satisfied with past accomplishments in this area of their walk with the Lord but are to **EXCEL** even more. **4:1, 2**
3. Though some reject and complain about this standard set by God for the Christian life, holiness is shown to be the **WILL OF GOD**. He defines exactly what he means when he uses the term **“SANCTIFICATION.”** **4:3-7**

- a. **“Sanctification” is both the requirement that there be a clear separation FROM the sins of the world and that this separation be separation TO living holy and righteous lives before God.**
- b. **Thus it is not a call to Phariseeism which follows a strict set of rules about what a person can and cannot do, but is separation from sin that does not lead to the true and pure holy walk before God. We note that the Lord condemned the empty and meaningless walk before God that the Pharisees were using, because it had not produced in their lives true holiness. They had OUTWARDLY separated themselves from the world, but INWARDLY they were just as wicked before God as anyone else. SEE: Matthew, chapter 23. Their “separation” was only for the sake of appearance, but it had no acceptance all with God.**
- c. **There are many types of sin from which we are to be separated (SEE: Romans 1:29-31; I Corinthians 6:12-20; Galatians 5:19-21), but the one in this passage that is his main focus is IMMORALITY. As the Lord emphasized in Matthew 5:27-30, this is not limited to just the actions that we take, but also has to do with our thoughts and desires. Everything about us is therefore to be separated from the world and its lusts.**
- d. **There are different interpretations of the phrase “vessel” in vs. 4.**
  - 1) **One possible interpretation is that it refers to the life and BODY of the individual Christian. SEE: I Corinthians 6:13, 15, 19, 20. This would emphasize that we have control over our lives and bodies and the CHOICES concerning what we will do with them.**
  - 2) **Another interpretation is that this refers to the WIFE of the Christian and the fact that his relationship with his wife is to absolutely be a pure and holy one with no possibility of lust and passion for anyone or anything outside their marriage harming their relationship.**
    - a) **This view seems supported by the reference to “defraud his brother” in 4:6a. This would seem to some to refer not only to a failure in his relationship with his own wife but also to the danger of lusting after another person’s wife.**

- b) In lusting after another person's wife (adultery), God will surely avenge the wrong that is committed by such an act. SEE: 4:6b
- e. He repeats God's call to SANCTIFICATION rather than impurity, and warns that when we violate this important principle for the Christian life, we are not opposing man but are opposing God Himself who has not only set the standard but has also given us the Holy Spirit to teach us and enforce that standard. 4:7, 8

**G. The Spiritual Goals of a Worthy Walk 4:9-12**

1. The first goal is "LOVE OF THE BRETHREN." This goal is emphasized again and again in most of his epistles. We find it emphasized also in the General Epistles. We see this, for instance, in I John where John makes it one of his main themes in this epistle. SEE: I John 2:10, 11; 3:14-19; 4:7-11. 4:9, 10
  - a. He indicates that he is not scolding them in reminding them of this, for he speaks of their reputation of practicing love with all of the brethren in Macedonia. 4:10a
  - b. His goal in mentioning this goal is that they might "EXCEL" more and more in it without being satisfied with their accomplishments in this area of their walk with the Lord. He had used the same phrase, "EXCEL," in vs. 1 when he speaks of living their lives in holiness before God. 4:10b

**H. The True Future Hope of Those With a Worthy Walk 4:13-18**

1. From these goals, he now addresses the subject of the Coming of the Lord FOR His own, THE RAPTURE.
2. We note the difference, both in situation and time, between the coming of the Lord FOR His own in the RAPTURE and the coming of the Lord WITH His own to the earth to rule and reign.
  - a. The first, the RAPTURE, His coming FOR His own, will come before the great Tribulation of seven years, when His people will be taken up BODILY to meet Him, both out of the graves, for those who have already died before His coming, and out of their

- lives in this world, for those who are living when He comes. He will not actually come down to the earth, but they will meet Him in the air and will be with Him for a time in heaven itself. It is this phase of the Coming of the Lord that is taught in this passage.**
- b. The second will be His coming WITH His own down to the earth to rule and reign. That will follow the Tribulation.**
- 3. The reason for the teaching being included in this section of I Thessalonians is that this seemed to have been a major problem with some of the believers. They had had loved ones die and then had buried them. As they said goodbye to these loved ones, they seemed to have no real hope of ever seeing them again in a real body.**
- a. They had either been uninstructed on the subject or they had listened to false teachers who had denied the literal “resurrection of the dead.” and the hope that that would bring to believers who had had their loved ones die. SEE: I Corinthians 15:12 and the entire discussion on the subject of “resurrection” in that chapter.**
  - b. The result was that they were “sorrowing even as others that had no hope.” Some might have altogether denied the bodily resurrection or they might have believed that it would only apply to those who were still living when He would come again. Either way, this brought them only despair rather than a joyous hope for the future and would have deeply affected their Christian lives and testimony.**
  - c. Because of Paul’s use of the phrase “sleep” in referring to their loved ones who have died, the passage seems to support the false teaching of the Adventists and others who teach the doctrine of “SOUL SLEEP.” Their idea is that the soul does not go immediately to be with the Lord when a person dies but “sleeps” in the body that is buried UNTIL the time of the resurrection of the dead. This contradicts II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:22, 23; and other passages that clearly teach that we go immediately to be with the Lord when we die in Him. “Sleep” in this passage is simply another word for DIE, and that term for death is often used.**

- 4. The teaching of this passage:**
- a. Paul approaches them as those who are “uninformed” on the subject and who are in danger of total grief and despair over the deaths of their loved ones. 4:13**
  - b. As he had taught also in I Corinthians 15:20-27, Paul bases his teaching on the fact that the Lord Himself was resurrected from the dead. This gives us the certainty of our own future BODILY resurrection from the dead. If death had conquered Him, then we would no hope for a bodily resurrection of ourselves. 4:14a**
  - c. He gives the promise that those who have died will just as much share in the resurrection of the dead as those who are still living on the earth. The promise is for both equally and we can rest in the assurance of that. 4:14b**
  - d. He also states that there will be no waiting period for those who have died at the coming of the Lord, as though the living would be caught up first and the dead would be caught up later. Actually, the dead will precede/go ahead of the rest of those who are still living on the earth to be with the Lord. God has directly revealed that to him (“by the Word of the Lord”), so this is not his own opinion. 4:15**
  - e. He then describes the MANNER of the Lord as He comes down from heaven to receive us unto Himself. It will be with trumpets and with excitement. It is not clear if those who are not saved will hear these sounds, but certainly God’s people will share in this. Again he repeats that the dead in Christ will be caught up first and then those who are alive. 4:16, 17a,b**
  - f. We will never be separated from the Lord for we will always be with Him. 4:17c**
  - g. He closes with the exhortation that they are to COMFORT one another with these promises. 4:18**
- 1) The assurance that comes with the promise of the future resurrection does not take away the human sorrow that we have when a loved one is separated from us in death, but takes away the**

- 2) The comfort we give one another will help with the human sorrow we feel.

**I. Christ's Coming as an Incentive to a Worthy Walk      5:1-11**

1. He returns again to the Coming of the Lord, but with different emphases both for non-Christians and Christians.
  - a. First he emphasizes the phrase "DAY OF THE LORD" which in the Old Testament most commonly spoke of the JUDGMENT of the Lord. In this passage, there will be emphasis upon this coming judgment on those who are unprepared spiritually for His coming.
  - b. In chapter 4:13-18, he had spoken in terms of COMFORT for the Christians and how they could help each other with comfort, but in this chapter he is speaking of the RESPONSIBILITIES of the Christians in preparing for the coming of the Lord.
2. In this passage he teaches:
  - a. We note that the Lord Himself had devoted most of two chapters, Matthew, chapters 24 and 25 to this subject. These Thessalonians had also been taught concerning these things, but may not have understood exactly how this would affect mankind. 5:1
  - b. He emphasizes the suddenness of the Coming of the Lord and how it will catch non-Christians by surprise as they think that everything is alright and they have nothing to fear. 5:2, 3a
  - c. For the non-Christian that DAY will bring destruction on them as the judgment of God awaits them. 5:3b
  - d. Christians are without excuse if they ignore the seriousness of the DAY for themselves, for they have all the knowledge they need to prepare for it. 5:4, 5

**e. He sets before them their RESPONSIBILITIES in preparing for that Day of the Lord. 5:6-11**

**1) They are not to (spiritually) sleep as others do, but are to be (spiritually) alert and sober/self-controlled. His Coming is not to be taken lightly but is to constantly be given very serious consideration and attention. 5:6, 7**

**2) They are to be armed with spiritual protection as they live in this world and wait for His Coming. SEE ALSO: Ephesians 6:10-18 where the “armor of God” is fully described. 5:8**

**a) Again he exhorts them to be “sober” or self-controlled as they wait for the Coming of the Lord. This will be in contrast to the unsaved who have no concern at all for His Coming.**

**b) The three parts of the protection they are to wear are FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE. These are the very qualities he had commended as being in them in chapter 1:3. We can see how these three qualities perfectly fit their spiritual needs in those times. These are to be continually renewed in them, and they will be the protection they need in waiting for the Coming of the Lord.**

**3) He then shares with them the basis for their complete assurance that they will never undergo the wrath of God at the Coming of the Lord. They have obtained salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. His death made it all possible so that both the dead and the living will have a future with Him.**

**4) Now, their further responsibility is both to encourage one another and build one another up with this knowledge of His finished work on their behalf as their assurance.**

**J. Their Respect For Spiritual Leadership as a Further Proof of a Worthy Walk before God. 5:12, 13**

**1. The spiritual leadership he is speaking of would be their pastors and any others who labor among them in their assemblies.**

2. **Lack of respect for Paul and other spiritual leaders was one of the major problems of the Corinthians (SEE: II Corinthians) and is one of the major problems in the churches of today.**
3. **When respect for the person who is the leader is lacking, then there will also be a lack of respect for the teaching he gives from the Word of God and for the Word of God itself. Those who have this fault would deny this, but it is revealed in the way they live their lives and in their frequent disobedience in other areas of life.**
4. **Satan is a clever enemy and knows how important it is to undermine the reputation of the ones who serve in the churches by the malicious treatment they sometimes receive from their members. Thus he also can destroy the respect for and attention to God's Word on the part of the believers in the assembly.**
4. **He closes this exhortation with the plea that they live in peace with one another. SEE: Romans 12:18 where "peace with ALL men" is emphasized. This can be tied in with his exhortation concerning respect for leadership.**

**K. Paul's Final Exhortations For a Worthy Walk 5:14-22**

1. **He first exhorts on behalf of those with problems. He speaks of the "unruly," the "fainthearted," and the "weak." The Church is to deal with these problems, but is to do so with patience. If these problems are not spiritually dealt with, they could affect the entire assembly of believers. SEE: I Corinthians 5:6-8, the danger of the "leaven" affecting the whole loaf. 5:14**
2. **That exhortation is followed by a number of spiritual admonitions/exhortations that are brief but are still very vital to their personal lives and to their lives together in the body of believers.**
  - a. **"See that none render evil for evil unto any man.." This compares with such passages as Romans 12:17-21 and Philippians 1:15-18. In the passage in Romans 12, Paul points out that God Himself will repay those who do evil against us and forbids them from taking personal revenge on evil doers. In the passage in Philippians 1, Paul**

**had been hurt by brethren who had maligned and spoken negatively of him, but he refused to yield to the temptation to retaliate against them. Instead he positively rejoices that the Gospel is still being proclaimed by them. 5:15a**

- b. “Follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men.” Whatever others might do or how badly they might treat us, our response is to be entirely positive toward them. Romans 12:18 precedes the admonition on not taking revenge by commanding, that they are to “be at peace with all men.” SEE ALSO: Proverbs 25:21 and Matthew 5:44, where we are to repay those who act in evil ways toward us with sacrifice and kindness on our part. This positive response applies to the saved and unsaved. 5:15b**
- c. “Rejoice evermore.” This corresponds to the teaching of the Epistle to the Philippians where Paul, though in difficult circumstances in the Roman prison, devotes the book to the positive theme of “joy” and “rejoice.” In that difficult situation, he found reason to have joy in the Lord Himself and did not let prison defeat him. 5:16**
- d. “Pray without ceasing.” This goes beyond just having daily times of prayer. It indicates that there is to be a continual attitude of prayer in believers no matter where they are or what they are doing. It implies living so close to the Lord that we are never really away from the Throne of God in our prayer life, but are in instant and intimate contact with Him always even in the ordinary affairs of our lives. 5:17**
- e. “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” This relates to Philippians 4:5,6, 7, where prayer in every circumstance of life is to be accompanied with sincere thanksgiving. It teaches us that no matter how urgent our prayer need might be, there is always reason to approach God with deep thanks in our hearts. SEE: Nehemiah 9 and Acts 4:23-32, where prayers were made in urgent circumstances, but they were made with deep thanks to God for WHO and WHAT He is. Remembering with thanks the Lord Himself and all He has done for us and all we owe Him would also be important. 5:18**

- f. **“Quench not the Spirit.”** There have been various interpretations of this passage, but the simplest and most credible one would be that we are not to resist or to hinder in any way the working of the Spirit in our lives. Whether He is convicting us of sin, is seeking to deal with some deep spiritual need in our lives, is seeking to give us clearer understanding of the Word, is leading us to some new task for the Lord or whatever He seeks to do in and with our lives, we are to be tender and responsive to His working. **5:19**
- g. **“Despise not prophesyings.”** We do not have this ministry today as a gift (SEE: I Corinthians 13:8-13), but in that day, when God was giving various ones special bits of revelations from heaven to teach and encourage the believers in that day when they had no written New Testament, the giving of prophecies was part of the worship of the believers. These were to be TESTED by those with the gift of discernment (SEE: I Corinthians 12:10; 14:29, 32; I John 4:1-3), but having been proven to truly be from God, they were to be respected, accepted and acted upon. We note that this principle has an important application to our lives today as we listen to the preaching and teaching of the Word from God’s faithful servants in the local church. **5:20, 21a**
- h. **“Hold fast to that which is good.”** This verse leads into the verse that follows. The reference here is not just to “good” as the world would see it or in the ordinary sense of the word, but would be referring to RIGHTEOUSNESS/HOLINESS and the need to constantly walk in it as part of the Christian life. SEE: Romans 6:1-7:7; Galatians 5:16. **5:21b**
- i. **“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”** This would have to do with separation from the world and the sins of the world, guarding our lives so that even the very appearance of evil is not present in us. SEE: Romans 6:1-7:7; Galatians 5:1-21; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 2:15-17. This might also refer to ways in which we are not actually sinning in our hearts, but what we are doing gives the IMPRESSION to others that we are sinning because of the questionable appearance of those actions. How others see us is very important to our testimony and example.

**L. Paul's Final Benedictory Prayer For the Complete  
Fulfillment of the Goals of a Worthy Walk**

**5:23, 24**

- 1. Having commended them very highly throughout the Epistle for their spirituality and faithful walk before the Lord, Paul is, in this benedictory prayer, urging them not to be satisfied with their past growth and spiritual walk but to continue to grow and mature and experience more and more of the spiritual life and walk that God intends for them.**
- 2. The emphasis is upon reaching completeness and full maturity in their Christian lives as they live and walk in the world. This is related to Paul's testimony in Philippians 3;10-14 where he emphasizes that he is not satisfied with how far he has come in the Lord, but is pressing on to even greater spiritual accomplishments in his life than he has ever experienced before. Having known Him in salvation, he now wants to KNOW HIM deeply (vs. 10).**
- 3. In this prayer, every part of them, BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT is to be committed to this spiritual goal and is to be affected as they go on in their Christian lives.**
- 4. He closes this benedictory prayer with the promise, "Faithful is He that calleth you that will also do it." This promise is directly related to the prayer that he had just shared with them. It is emphasizing that not only should they completely yield themselves to God and depend on Him to bring to pass this completeness and maturity in their lives, but that God is completely able (by the working of the indwelling Holy Spirit in their lives) (SEE: Romans 8:1-29; Galatians 5:16) to give them the ability to see this come to pass.**

**III. CONCLUSION**

**5:25-28**

- A. "Brethren, pray for us." Paul can depend on these believers, just as he also will later depend on the Philippians (61 A.D.), to support him in prayer and encouragement. As Macedonians, they represented the most spiritual of all of the believers in the churches.**
- B. "Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss." Some have joked about this command, but it has very serious implications. Paul is**

**emphasizing the close bond between the believers. This is, in fact, a custom that is followed by believers in Russia and other places and carries with it no hint of immorality though it might be slightly embarrassing to some from Western cultures.**

- C. “I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.” This statement would seem to indicate that this epistle was to be shared with those of other churches as well as the Church in Thessalonica. We see this also in Colossians 4:16, where that Epistle was to be shared with those at Laodicea.**
- D. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” In chapter 1, vs. 1, he had wished the same thing for them and now he closes the Epistle with this blessing on them. This is a common blessing that he includes in most of his epistles. The meaning of “GRACE” is not saving grace but rather the sustaining/strengthening grace of God. SEE; II Corinthians 12:7-10. In their salvation they need this special strength from the Lord daily in their lives.**

## **THE STUDY OF II THESSALONIANS**

### **INTRODUCTION TO II THESSALONIANS**

#### **1. THE AUTHOR OF II THESSALONIANS**

- a. Again, not only does Paul introduce himself in the first verse of chapter one, but also from the study of the structure of the epistle and the words and language that are used, it is clear that Paul was also the author of this epistle.**
- b. The situation that the author is in exactly fits the life and work of Paul during the period of time in which the epistle was written. It could not be anyone else writing this epistle**
- c. Its close link with the epistle of I Thessalonians also identifies the fact that the same person wrote both epistles, for it builds upon the teaching and exhortations of I Thessalonians.**

## **2. THE PLACE OF THE WRITING OF II THESSALONIANS**

- a. The close connection between its teachings and that of I Thessalonians indicates that it was written to that church from the same situation of the author as the first epistle.**
- b. Therefore, just as the origin of the writing of the epistle of I Thessalonians is identified with the City of Ephesus, so this epistle was also written from the same city.**

## **3. THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF II THESSALONIANS**

- a. Also, the same close connection between the contents of II Thessalonians and I Thessalonians seems to prove that it was written very soon after that first epistle.**
- b. It seems likely that Paul had received some word back from the believers in the church or from some of his coworkers concerning several of the problems in the church and this news motivated him to write again with further instructions and exhortations to them concerning how they were follow correct doctrine and how they were to deal with those problems.**
- c. It appears that this epistle was written just one year after Paul wrote I Thessalonians. The date for the writing would be 53 A.D.**

## **4. THE EMPHASIS AND MAJOR THEMES OF II THESSALONIANS**

- a. The main emphasis of this epistle is upon standing fast in the Truth they have been taught and taking a stand against those who would deny or distort that Truth either by teaching or by disobedient conduct.**
- b. He wants them to receive from the Lord the true and full assurance of their future hope and the full reward for their worthy walk before God and man. This can only happen if they continue in their worthy walk and stand for the Lord and His Truth.**

## **5. THE OUTLINE OF II THESSALONIANS**

### **THE FUTURE HOPE AND REWARDS FOR THOSE WITH A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN**

- I. INTRODUCTION 1:1, 2**
- II. THE FUTURE HOPE AND REWARDS FOR THOSE  
WITH A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN 1:3-3:16**
  - A. They Have Gained God's Approval of Their Lives 1:3-5**
  - B. God Will Distinguish Them From Those Afflicting Them 1:6-10**
  - C. God is Able to Fulfill All His Desires In Their Lives 1:11,12**
  - D. God Gives Understanding and Hope to Them of  
Christ's Coming While Judging Those Who Deny  
Or Distort the Truth 2:1-12**
  - E. They Have Strong Motivation to Stand Firm For Him  
Because of God's Choosing of Them in Salvation 2:13-15**
  - F. Benedictory Prayer For Their Comfort and Strength 2:16, 17**
  - G. Their Prayer Support of Paul and His Encouragement  
in Praying For Their Spiritual Growth and Stability 3:1-6**
  - H. The Necessary Cleansing of the Church Through the  
Discipline of Sinning Members is Taught. 3:7-15**
  - I. Closing Benedictory Prayer For Peace For Them  
In All Circumstances 3:16**
- III. CONCLUSION 3:17, 18**

# **THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF II THESSALONIANS**

## **THE FUTURE HOPE AND REWARDS FOR THOSE WITH A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN**

### **I. INTRODUCTION 1:1, 2**

- A. We note that his Introduction is practically the same as the one he had used in his Introduction to I Thessalonians.**
- 1. He does not assert his apostleship, which would be an affirmation both of his authority to write on behalf of God to them and also their obligation to faithfully and fully heed the teaching and admonitions to them. In most of his other epistles, that statement of his apostleship needed to be stated. With the Thessalonians (and Philippians) this was not necessary because their attitude was both humble and obedient before God. SEE: II Corinthians 8:1-3**
  - 2. His same companions, Silvanus and Timothy, are still with him, which indicates that this epistle was written not too long after the writing of I Thessalonians. Perhaps II Thessalonians was written either at the end of the same year or early the next year.**
  - 3. He also, in his identification of the addressees and in his blessing on them, does so in the Names of both the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, emphasizing the Deity of the Lord and His place of equality with the Father in the Godhead.**
- B. The blessing, “GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU,” is the one he uses in the introductions to most of his other epistles. His desire for them is that they would have the STRENGTHENING GRACE of God and the PEACE OF GOD (freedom from worries and fears as in Philippians 4:6, 7) in their hearts as they live in a troubled world.**

### **II. THE FUTURE HOPE AND REWARDS FOR THOSE WITH A WORTHY WALK BEFORE GOD AND MAN 1:3-3:16**

- A. They Have Gained God’s Approval of Their Lives 1:3-5**

- 1. God sets standards for those who would gain His approval of their lives as they prepare for His Kingdom. Christians are to be diligent in meeting those standards. SEE: I Corinthians 3:12-17; 9:27.**
  - a. These standards include not only how they are to live and conduct themselves in their personal Christian lives, but also how completely committed they are to Him in the midst of the persecutions and afflictions they endure at the hands of those in the unsaved world.**
  - b. God Himself permits these persecutions and afflictions to come to them. Though they suffer from them, the result is that God sees these trials as a TEST of this complete commitment to Him as they are willing to pay any cost to themselves to be faithful to Him.**
- 2. The Thessalonians have met the test in both of these areas of their lives as they have manifested their spirituality before God through the spiritual qualities in their lives, and have had a strong stand for the Lord in the midst of their persecutions and afflictions. We note that he never refers to any failures in these areas, and also in referring to them in II Corinthians 8:1-3, he is pleased to use them as key spiritual examples to the Corinthians.**
- 3. The qualities that have been manifested in their lives are:**
  - a. The strength of their personal faith and the evidence of their love for one another that is growing continually. Vs. 3**
  - b. These qualities have been further manifested in the perseverance and faith they have shown in the stand they have taken for the Lord in the midst of their persecutions. Vs. 4**
- 4. Though they have suffered for their faith here on this earth, Paul is confident that they are fully prepared for this coming Kingdom of God when all that they have endured in this life will end and they will be with Him in that Kingdom and worship Him forever. SEE: Philippians 2:9-11.**

**B. God Distinguishes Between Them and The Afflicting Ones 1:6-10**

- 1. Though it might seem to those undergoing persecution and affliction that the persecutors are free to do whatever they wish to them with no consequences (SEE: Psalms 73:1-14), God has a time of dealing with those persecutors and they will pay the full price and consequences for all they have done. SEE: Psalms 73:17-20, 27.**
  - a. God will act with His vengeance against those who know not God and obey not His Gospel. Apparently this will begin even in this life. Vs. 6**
  - b. Their future end is eternal punishment away from the presence of the Lord and His power and glory. Vs. 8, 9**
- 2. At the same time, there is the promise that the Christians enduring these persecutions will someday be given rest by God and will worship and honor Him at that time, with all their future treatment by God being the exact opposite of the unsaved. Vs. 7, 10**
- 3. The final dealings of God with both the unsaved and the saved will come when He shall return in His glory and power. The saved will enjoy eternity with the Lord with reward and eternal rest, while the unsaved will be judged and sent to hell. Vs. 10**

**C. God is Able to Fulfill All His Desires in Their Lives 1:11, 12**

- 1. He closes this chapter with a prayer of encouragement that he continually brings before God on their behalf, that the Lord may help them live completely worthy lives, that all of His purposes in their lives might be fulfilled according to His goodness and that He might complete anything lacking in their lives of faith. Vs. 11**
- 2. He also prays for the desired result of his request to God. He prays that the NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them and that they might share the effects of that glory as they live in and for Him. This will be true by the GRACE (sustaining/helping grace) of God and the Lord Jesus Christ in them. Vs. 12**

**3. He has already highly commended them in these areas, so he is not doubting them in prayer. Rather, he is praying that they will grow in these areas and may not fail in their future walk with Him.**

**D. God Gives Understanding and Hope to Them of Christ's Coming While Judging Those Who Deny Or Distort the Truth**

**2:1-12**

**1. He begins this passage by pointing out that there are many who are either distorting or denying the Truth of the Coming of the Lord, and he is concerned that there is danger that they will be shaken in their own faith and hope in Him by these false teachers. SEE ALSO: I Corinthians 15:12, 13-19. 2:1, 2**

**2. These distorters ("that the Day of the Lord has come") and deniers are completely misled. Some of them may even pretend that they speak, in a letter to the Thessalonians, with the authority of Paul himself. 2:2**

**3. That Day of the Lord is linked to the great "APOSTASY" which will come when the representative of Satan will reveal himself in all his power and evil plans, seeking to even exalt himself as though he is God. 2:3, 4**

**4. At the time of the writing of this epistle, Satan and his representative are being restrained by God and the believers need not worry about what is going to happen. He will not only be restrained in how far he can go with his evil plans, but he will finally be taken out of the way by God. 2:5-9**

**a. He will be able to perform certain signs and wonders to help in deceiving the people of the world but even these will be limited.**

**b. At the Coming of the Lord, this representative of Satan will be finally judged, "slain by the breath of His mouth."**

**5. His followers will be those who have not received the Truth so that they could be saved, but rather they took pleasure in wickedness. These, having already turned from the Truth will be given a**

**deluding influence so that they will believe what is false and then will be finally eternally judged by God. 2:10-12**

**E. They Have Strong Motivation to Stand Firm For Him Because of God's Choosing of Them in Salvation 2:13-15**

- 1. Paul rejoices in the fact that these Thessalonians to whom he is writing were chosen by God for salvation through the convicting and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. 2:13**
- 2. In their salvation, they will have the firm hope of sharing in the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, both at His coming and for all eternity. 2:14**
- 3. In their salvation, with the assurance of the hope that this salvation has brought to them, they are to stand firm and hold fast to the teachings they have been given. 2:15**

**F. Benedictory Prayer For Their Comfort and Strength 2:16, 17**

- 1. This is the first of several prayers in this epistle that are expressed in the form of benedictions, beginning with the phrase "MAY". Others are found in 3:5 and 3:16.**
- 2. This is a prayer for the Lord to supply the COMFORT and STRENGTH they need in every circumstance of life and in everything they do for Him. SEE: II Corinthians 1:3-7, where God is called the "God of all Comfort," and is the supplier of all the comfort they would ever need as they live in this world.**
- 3. In this prayer, he points out that they have already experienced this "eternal comfort" and "good hope" in their salvation by Grace as they came into an eternal relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. 2:16.**
- 4. Now they need the ongoing ministry of God in their lives in supplying all the comfort/encouragement/uplifting (SEE: the work of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-18) they need in living on this earth while they wait for their final enjoyment of eternity with Him. 2:17.**

**G. Their Needed Prayer Support of Paul and His Encouragement to them in Praying For Their Spiritual Growth and Stability 3:1-5**

- 1. Paul in many of his epistles (SEE: Ephesians, chapters 1:15-23; 3:14-19; Philippians, chapter 1:9-11; Colossians, chapter 1:9-12) prays earnestly for the people to whom he is writing that their deep spiritual needs might be met. Their need may be for a fuller understanding of the salvation in which they stand, or it may be a need for fuller understanding of the Christian faith and life, or it might involve some problem in their church or personal lives.**
- 2. He ALSO frequently expresses his own personal need for their earnest prayer on HIS behalf as he goes through the difficult circumstances he faces in doing the work of God. This chapter opens with his plea to them to support him in such earnest prayer as he faces wicked and unbelieving men. 3:1, 2**
- 3. He then shares some words of encouragement with them, closing with his prayer that they might be directed into the full love of God and the steadfastness of the Lord Himself. 3:3-5**
  - a. His encouragement includes the promise of the FAITHFULNESS of God in their relationship with Him. SEE ALSO: I Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; I Thessalonians 5:24.**
  - b. He also expresses his confidence in them that they will continue to faithfully follow his instructions. 3:3-5**

**H. The Necessary Cleansing of the Church Through the Disciplining of Sinning Members is Taught. 3:6-15**

- 1. The subject of the DISCIPLINING of sinning members in the local church is discussed in a number of passages in Paul's Epistles. SEE: I Corinthians, chapter 5 (immorality); Galatians 6:1 (restoration after sin and discipline); II Thessalonians 3:5-15 (TO BE DISCUSSED); II Timothy 3:1-5-9 (gross open sinners in their midst); Titus 1:10-16 (rebellious men); Titus 3:10, 11 (troublemakers); II Peter, chapter 2 (false teachers); I John 2:18, 19 (not true believers); II John, vs. 9-11 (false teachers); Jude, vs.**

**4-10-16 (selfish, sinful and troublesome people); Revelation 2:14-16 (false teachers); and Revelation 2:20-23 (a false prophetess).**

- 2. Though this was a very spiritual church and was commended in many ways both in I and II Thessalonians, there were members in the church who were living in sinful life patterns and needed to be seriously dealt with by church discipline.**
  - a. The first type of persons he deals with are those who are living lazy and undisciplined lives, refusing to work and living off of the support of the other believers in the Church. He calls them “unruly” in nature. 3:6-12**
    - 1) Paul reminds them of his own example when he was among them of working to support himself and refusing to be a burden to anyone.**
      - a) He notes that as a servant of the Lord (and Apostle) he had the RIGHT to be supported by them so that he could devote himself entirely to his work of evangelizing and building them up. SEE ALSO: I Corinthians, chapter 9:6-14, 15.**
      - b) However, he did not use this right so that he could be an example to them of the teachings he had given them about each one diligently working to support himself**
      - c) In using himself as an example of not being a burden to anyone, he is not denying the responsibility of churches to support their workers. He makes this clear in I Corinthians 9:6-14 where he states several times the principle of the laborer who is worthy of his hire. SEE ALSO: Galatians 6:6; I Timothy 5:17, 18; and Titus 3:13, 14. He is simply saying that he himself gave up that right in order to guard his testimony and example before them. That is also his line of thought in I Corinthians 9 where he had voluntarily given up that right as well other rights he had as an Apostle. He felt that if he had claimed all of the “rights” that belonged to him, it might have given others grounds for criticizing and tearing down his reputation.**

- 2) **Although he does not say that they are to be cast out of the church, he does lay down a very strict disciplinary action for the church to apply to them. The discipline is that: if they will not work then no one else is to feed them. They will simply be left with no support or means of eating. Their alternative will be to give up their lazy undisciplined ways and work for their living just like everyone else.**
  
- 3) **This does not go against the principle of the church helping those who CANNOT work at all due to age or illness or some other difficult circumstance in life. SEE: Acts 6:1, 2; I Timothy 5:2-10. It also does not go against the principle of assisting Christian workers. He is dealing here with those who CAN work and yet do not.**
  
- 4) **The strict application of this discipline will cause these people either to get right with the Lord and stop their laziness and undisciplined behavior, or it may cause them to leave the church altogether and stop being a poor testimony and influence on others.**
  
- b. **He also deals with those who refuse to respond to and obey the Word of God that he is sharing with them. 3:14, 15**
  - 1) **As an Apostle, everything he was sharing with them was the Word of God that he was divinely inspired to record, and was to be respected, accepted and obeyed. Anyone who would not respond in such a manner was resisting God Himself rather than Paul. Lack of response to the Word given in his epistles would therefore be a sin against God.**
  
  - 2) **Apparently, there were some in the church who were openly rebellious against the Word of God that he is sharing. Their rebellion will not only affect their own lives but it will influence others to follow their example. The Corinthian believers had the same problem in regard to the many sins (12) that are dealt with in I Corinthians. Paul, in I Corinthians 5 speaks of the LEAVEN that leavens the whole loaf.**

- 3) **It was not enough to simply rebuke them for their rebellion. There must also be a separation and rejection of them in the assembly.**
  - a) **We note that this separation from them is to be done in a way that recognizes that they are still Christian brothers (3:15), but it is to be definite and strong in the way it is done.**
  - b) **We note from other passages (SEE: Galatians 6:1; II Corinthians 2:5-10) that it is to be done in love. If there is true repentance which not only indicates a heart sorrow for the sin but also an abandonment of it, then they are also to be completely received back/restored in fellowship in the Church in love.**

**I. The Closing Benedictory Prayer For Peace For Them In All Circumstances of Life.**

**3:16**

1. **This is the third benedictory prayer in this epistle. The first, in 2:16, 17, was a prayer for their comfort and strength in the Lord. The second, in 3:5, was a prayer that they might be directed by God deeper into His love and into the steadfastness shown in the example of Christ their Savior.**
2. **This prayer deals with the subject of the PEACE that they need in all circumstances of life. Lack of PEACE in their hearts, for those who already have PEACE WITH GOD in salvation, in the more difficult circumstances of life can be a major source of defeat in many Christian lives.**
3. **Paul deals with the same subject in Philippians, chapter 4, where he speaks of having peace in their hearts as they pray (4:6, 7), and then speaks of the contentment (peace) that he has in his own heart in all of the circumstances he has gone through in serving the Lord (4:11-13)**
4. **He bases this wish on the fact that the Lord is a “Lord of Peace” and is able to abundantly bless them with His peace. The Lord Himself had given this promise to His followers in John 14:27 when they were upset by some of the circumstances they would face after he would return to heaven and they would be sent out to serve Him.**

### **III. CONCLUSION**

**3:17, 18**

- A. Paul closes this epistle by signing it with his own signature. His poor eyesight (SEE: Galatians 4:12-15, 16) made the writing down difficult, but his signature validated what was written. We note that all of his epistles were written through a scribe who put down what Paul was led by God to share with them. At the end of them Paul would then sign his name.**
  
- B. He closes the epistle with the desire for God's GRACE/sustaining strength for them as they live their Christian lives in this world. SEE: II Corinthians 12:7-10.**