

Through the Bible Book by Book

New Testament

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SECOND THESSALONIANS

(Read the entire Epistle)

Theme: Second Thessalonians sets forth the second coming of the Lord in its relation to persecuted believers, unrepentant sinners, and an apostate church.

Why Written: The Epistle was written for the following purposes:

1. To comfort believers during a new outbreak of persecutions. 1:4.
2. To correct a false teaching to the effect that the day of the Lord had already come (2:1). The severe persecutions had led some to believe that the great tribulation had begun.
3. To warn some who were walking disorderly. 3:6.

When Written: The Epistle was written soon after Paul's first Epistle to the same church.

Contents: These center round the teaching of the second coming of the Lord in relation to:

I. Persecuted Believers. 1:1-7.

II. The Unrepentant. 1:8-12.

III. Apostasy. 2:1-12.

IV. Service. 2:13 to 3:18.

Paul begins this Epistle with the usual salutation (1:1, 2). He thanks God for the fact that the believers are growing in grace and love (v. 3), and commends them for their patience in persecutions (v. 4).

Their patience in these persecutions shows that they believe that God's justice will finally prevail (v. 5), when the wicked will suffer (v. 6), and the righteous will be given rest (v. 7). This will take place after that Christ has taken away His people (v. 10).

Chapter 2 is the heart of the Epistle. The words "**day of Christ**" (v. 2) is the same as the "**day of the Lord.**"

The words “**day of the Lord**” refer to that period of time during which God will deal in judgment with Israel and the nations, which period will be one of great tribulation (compare Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Isaiah 2:10-22).

It appears that some false teachers had been spreading the belief that the day of the Lord had already come (2:2). This teaching they bolstered up by pretended spiritual revelations, and a forged letter, supposedly from Paul (v. 2).

This teaching caused great consternation among the believers, who were fearful that they had missed the rapture about which Paul had spoken in the first Epistle. To correct the false belief Paul mentioned the following events that must precede the coming of the day of the Lord:

1. A falling away on the part of the professed church. v. 3.
2. The catching away of God’s people (v. 7).

This is not directly stated, but the implication is very strong. “**He that letteth** (i.e., hinders) **will let, until he be taken out of the way.**” Here reference is made to a power that is hindering the mystery of iniquity from coming to its consummation.

- The direct reference is to the Holy Spirit;
- The indirect to the church in which the Spirit dwells.

Our Lord referred to believers as the salt of the earth, i.e., the element that preserves, and that hinders corruption. Matthew 5:13. Once this preserving element is removed, iniquity and lawlessness will flood the earth.

3. The revelation of Antichrist (vv. 3, 4). What is the general teaching of the Scriptures concerning this man? Daniel 7:8, 11, 21, 25; 8:23; 9:27; John 5:43; I John 4:3; Revelation 13:4-8; 19:19.

Chapter 3 contains sundry exhortations that require no especial explanation.

~ end of II Thessalonians ~

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