

Key to II Thessalonians

1. BACKGROUND:

Writer is the Apostle Paul who pens this letter from Corinth about A.D. 52 (as with also the first Epistle to the Thessalonians).

Paul had established the church there as he came from Troas and Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 17). But he had been driven from the city and had gone on south to Berea, Athens, and Corinth. However, he was much concerned about the infant church in Thessalonica and he sent his friend, Timothy, to return and observe. In due time Timothy reported that all was well, and the church was growing. Paul here wrote I Thessalonians and sent it by the hand of Timothy.

It is thought that II Thessalonians was sent soon after by the same messenger.

2. THEME

The subject of this second letter is still the return of CHRIST. But the Thessalonian Christians were "**shaken in mind [and] troubled**" mostly due to a forged letter purporting to come from Paul, telling them that the present persecutions were the beginning of the great and terrible day of the Lord. This was in contrast to what Paul had previously taught, that they were to be delivered from this hour of trial. This second letter to the Thessalonians then, is written to clarify doctrine already given.

3. MAIN DIVISIONS:

The letter can be divided as: Comfort (1); instruction (2); exhortation (3).

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The first letter to the Thessalonians was written to "comfort"; the second letter to "correct."

Both letters are marked with simplicity and great affection. They show deep affection and love which does not always characterize Paul's later letters.

It is noteworthy that there are no direct quotations from the Old Testament which could be due to the fact that Paul is addressing Gentile believers who knew nothing of the older Scriptures.

5. OUTLINE:

Introduction (1:1-5)

Instruction (1:6-2:12)

Day of Judgment

Man of Sin

Application (2:13-3:15)

Consolation

Prayer

Labor

Obedience

Conclusion (3:16-18)

6. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

Evidently the teaching here has the main thought of the coming of CHRIST in power and great glory; this is in distinction to the emphasis in I Thessalonians which is on the rapture or translation of the Church.

A strong passage in chapter 2:3-12 tells of many characteristics of the coming man of sin, who is also called the beast, the son of perdition, and the antichrist.

The words translated "**let**" and "**letteth**" in 2:7 have the common meaning of "hinder" and "hindereth" and no doubt refer to the work of the HOLY SPIRIT in this age. It seems that there were some in Thessalonica who understood the truth of the nearness of the LORD's return to be a signal for them to quit their jobs and wait for Him in idleness. To these Paul directs strong commands that they "**work, and eat their own bread.**" Added to this were stern directions that if any did not obey the word of the apostle, he was to be ostracized from the Christian company.

While the second coming of CHRIST was to Paul the "**blessed hope**" (Titus 2:13), yet he never permitted the imminence to interfere with his ardent and fervent labors for CHRIST.

7. KEY:

In your mind you may associate these two books together. They both deal largely with the coming of CHRIST. Read them with your eyes shining.

~ end of II Thessalonians ~

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