

The background image shows ancient ruins, likely the Temple of Apollo in Side, Turkey. In the foreground, there are stone walls and a path. To the right, a well-preserved temple structure with four Corinthian columns and a pediment stands prominently. In the background, a blue body of water meets a coastline with more ruins, and distant mountains are visible under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

# **Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians**

## **INTRODUCTION**

# INTRODUCTION TO SECOND THESSALONIANS

## Continuing the Story

- The letter was likely written from Corinth in 49-52 AD (**Acts 17:10-18:1-5, 12**).  
*“It is generally thought that it was written a few weeks after the writing of the first letter, or at the most a few months later” (Weaver, p.22).*
  - Paul was persecuted while in Corinth (**Acts 18:5-16; 1 Cor. 2:3**).
- Just like with the first letter, Silas and Timothy were with Paul at the time of writing (**1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1**).
- Despite still enduring still enduring persecution, the Thessalonians were growing in faith and love (**1 Thess. 1:6, 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:3-4**).
- However, confusion concerning the Day of the Lord existed, as well as problems with disorderly members (**2 Thess. 2:1-6, 3:6-15**).
  - This news was brought to Paul by an unnamed person (**2 Thess. 3:11**).
    - The unnamed person may have been Timothy (**1 Thess. 3:1-2, 6; Acts 18:5**).

# INTRODUCTION TO SECOND THESSALONIANS

## Comparing the Two Letters

*“Both letters ... are thought to be the first inspired books of the New Testament that were written ... Evidently conditions had not improved since First Thessalonians was written. Persecution against the church had increased, thus hope in the second advent of Christ had become a topic of great concern. In the first letter Paul had relieved their doubts about whether or not deceased brethren would be disadvantaged at the coming of Christ, 1 Thess. 4:13-18. But other misconceptions about His second coming had increased rather than diminished, thus necessitating this second letter. It had been about twenty years prior to this letter that Jesus Christ had ascended to heaven and had promised to return at an uncertain date. The desire for and expectation of His return had heightened. Some misunderstandings had arisen, caused either by (1) Paul's first letter, (2) a forged letter from him (2:2), or (3) by misjudging world conditions. It is common even today that some assess current events in the world and predict an imminent return of Jesus Christ” (Harkrider, p.104).*

# INTRODUCTION TO SECOND THESSALONIANS

## Comparing the Two Letters

### • First Thessalonians

- Comfort concerning deceased Christians (**4:13-18**).
- Christ's return will be sudden and unexpected (**5:1-3**).
- Work quietly and admonish the unruly (**4:11-12, 5:14**).
- Persecution is acknowledged (**2:14, 3:3-4**).

### • Second Thessalonians

- Correction concerning the Day of the Lord (**2:1-12**).
- Certain events proved that the Day had not already come (**2:3-12**).
- Refuse to support those who will not work and withdraw from the disorderly (**3:6-15**).
- God's judgment upon persecutors and rest for the faithful (**1:5-10**).

- The letters compliment rather than contradict each other.

*"Paul does not give signs to help them know the exact time of Christ's coming, but to assure them that He had not already come" (Weaver, p.23).*

# INTRODUCTION TO SECOND THESSALONIANS

## The Purpose of the Letter

- Commend their growing faith, love, patience, and faithfulness (**1:3-4**).
- Encourage those suffering persecution with promises of rest and God's righteous judgment (**1:5-10**).
- Pray that they would live worthy of God's calling (**1:11-12**).
- Correct the claim that the Day of the Lord had already come (**2:1-12**).
- Encourage steadfastness in apostolic teaching (**2:13-17**).
- Request prayers for the spread of the gospel (**3:1-5**).
- Correct disorderly idleness and instruct the church concerning discipline (**3:6-15**).
- Assure them of the Lord's faithfulness, protection, and peace (**3:3, 16**).

# INTRODUCTION TO SECOND THESSALONIANS

## Words of Caution

- Paul was not providing a timetable by which Christians could calculate the date of Christ's return (**Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:7; 1 Thess. 5:1-2**).
- The identities of the “man of sin” and the one who “restrains” him have produced considerable disagreement (**2 Thess. 2:3-8**). We need to harmonize all relevant passages before reaching a conclusion.

# OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

- **Chapter One**

- Greeting (1:1-2)
- Thanksgiving for Growth & Endurance (1:3-4)
- God's Judgment (1:5-10)
- Paul's Prayer for the Thessalonians (1:11-12)

- **Chapter Two**

- Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)
- Thanksgiving, Exhortation, & Prayer (2:13-17)

- **Chapter Three**

- Paul's Request for Prayers (3:1-5)
- Warnings Against Idleness (3:6-15)
- Closing Remarks (3:16-18)

