

2 Thessalonians

Since Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, problems had arisen in the church. False teachers had upset the followers of Jesus by claiming that the "day of Christ" had already occurred. Such news inspired idleness in the church and prompts Paul to respond: "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the events which must take place before Christ's return. Those undergoing persecution can take heart, knowing that God's righteous judgment will settle all accounts equitably. Paul exhorts his readers to be steadfast and diligent, buying up the opportunities, rather than merely biting their time.

INTRODUCTION

Seeds of false doctrine have been sown among the Thessalonians, causing them to waver in their faith. Paul removes these destructive seeds and again plants the seeds of truth. He begins by commending the believers on their faithfulness in the midst of persecution and encouraging them that present suffering will be repaid with future glory.

Paul then deals with the central matter of his letter: a misunderstanding created by false teachers regarding the coming day of the Lord. Despite reports to the contrary, that day has not yet come, and Paul recounts the events that must first take place. Laboring for the gospel, rather than idleness, is the proper response.

AUTHOR

The external evidence of 2 Thessalonians as a Pauline epistle is even stronger than that of 1 Thessalonians. Internal evidence clearly supports the claims that it was written by Paul.

As the second letter in Paul's Thessalonian correspondence, this was entitled *Pros Thessalonikies B*, the "Second to the Thessalonians."

DATE & SETTING

This letter was probably written a few months after 1 Thessalonians, while Paul was still in Corinth with Silas and Timothy (2 Thessalonians 1:1; Acts 18:5). The bearer of the first epistle may have brought Paul an update on the new developments, prompting him to write this letter. They were still undergoing persecution, and the false teachings about the day of the Lord led some of them to overreact by giving up their jobs. The problem of idleness recorded in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, had become more serious (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).