**Metadata**

* + A short letter written (AD 53) during Paul’s second missionary journey while Paul was in Corinth (cf. Acts 18:1-17), only months after 1 Thessalonians. Perhaps as soon as the first was delivered, and a report brought back to Paul. Paul was in Corinth for 18 months (vs 11).
  + Thessalonica was a seacoast city (Thermaic gulf, of the Agean Sea), in the province of Macedonia. During Paul’s time it was a free Roman city. The city had much commerce (Egnatian Road, a natural harbor made it an important seaport). Diverse citizenship.
  + The Epistle has been divided into 3 chapters and 47 verses.

**Outline of Book**

1. **God’s Final Judgment (1)**
   1. Greeting (1:1-2)
   2. The judgment explained (1:3-12)
2. **Error Exposed and Refuted (2)**
   1. Assurance regarding the Day of the Lord (2:1-2)
   2. The man of sin (2:3-12)
   3. A call for steadfastness (2:13-17)
3. **Dealing with the Disorderly (3)**
   1. Request for prayer (3:1-2)
   2. Expressions of confidence (3:3-5)
   3. Instructions regarding the idle (3:6-15)
   4. Final salutation (3:16-18)

**Paul’s Purpose in Writing 2 Thessalonians**

* To give them hope amid persecution
* To warn them against a particular error that had troubled them regarding the coming of Jesus
* To explain how to deal with members of the congregation who were walking “disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us” (3:6)

**Chapter Synopses**

1. Paul expressed appreciation for the patience and faith of the Thessalonians in the midst of severe persecution. He assured them of God’s righteousness, and promised them that things would be made right when *“Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels”* (7).
2. Paul addressed an error that troubled them, as some were *“shaken in mind”* (2) regarding Christ’s second coming. He assured them it had not yet happened, and would not until an apostasy occurred, with the manifestation of the *“man of sin”* (3). He described this apostasy, and called for the Thessalonians to remain steadfast, holding *“the traditions which you were taught”* (15).
3. Paul requested prayers on his and his fellow workers behalf. He noted the idleness of some in the congregation, and the sins that accompanied the idleness. He called on them to withdraw from those who would not repent of these sins, and called on them *to “not grow weary in doing good”* (13).

**Suggested Memory Work**

**(1:6-7)**, *“since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed form heaven with His mighty angels”*

**(2:15)**, *“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”*

**(2:16-17)**, *“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father,*  *who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”*

**(3:1-2)**, *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.”*

**(3:13)**, *“But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.”*

**Difficult Passages**

* In light of current tendencies toward tolerance, explain how it is *“a righteous thing with God”* (1:6) to punish the wicked. How can the taking of vengeance (1:8) on those who do not know God be appropriate?
* Define the term *“everlasting destruction”* (1:9)
* Who is the *“man of sin, the son of perdition*” (2:3) (Note: this is a very difficult question, and should be approached with caution).
* Note: The entire text of 2:1-12 is difficult, and will be discussed under “doctrinal considerations.
* What “traditions” should be held to (2:15, 3:6), and what traditions may be damaging to our faith?

**Doctrinal Considerations**

* **The righteous judgment of God (1:3-10)**
* The *“worthy”* walk of the elect (1:11-12; 2:15; 3:13)
* **The (at that time yet future) apostasy (2:1-12)**
* The Faithfulness of God (3:3-4; cf. 1:5-10)
* Authoritative *“tradition”* (3:14; cf. 2:15; 3:6)
* **The doctrine of discipline/withdrawal (3:6-15)**

**Practical Considerations**

* *“Patience and faith”* are the appropriate response to “persecutions and tribulations” (1:4).
* Consider that the promised “rest” (cf. 1:7) gives sufficient motivation amidst persecution.
* False doctrines of all types must be contended against because they cause brethren to be *“shaken in mind or troubled”* and *“deceived”* (2:2-3.)
* Paul’s preaching contained many references to false teaching, with warnings and admonitions to his readers (cf. 2:5)
* A steadfast walk includes fidelity to the written word (2:15)
* God is the author of condolences and comfort (2:16-17)
* Those who do not have faith will always seek to harm those of faith (3:1-2, cf. 1:3-10)
* Idleness leads to other sins, like gossip and disorder (3:7-11)
* How does (3:10) contrast with toward current societal and governmental policies?
* The purpose of discipline is to shame the sinner (3:14). Shame convicts, and may lead to repentance.

**Questions to Consider**

* When we see the wicked prosper while on earth (and the righteous suffer), what do we know about God’s fairness?
* Can one be worthy of *“this calling”* (1:11) if he is not obedient? If not, what is the consequence of an unworthy walk?
* Does Paul’s description and warning of the *“man of sin”* (3:3-4) have any practical application for us today?
* Can you think of other sins that come from idle hands? How does idleness show itself in our lives today?
* Can you say your feelings and inclinations regarding the withdrawal of fellowship from the disorderly line up with God’s word? If not, why not?

**Student Questions**

*(Use this space and back of page to prepare questions and comments for class discussion. Since this is not a “verse by verse” study, make sure that all your questions concerning the text are answered).*