

INTRODUCTION TO 2ND THESSALONIANS

- I. Authorship, place and date of writing.
 - A. There is far more debate regarding Paul's authorship of 2nd Thessalonians in contrast to 1st Thessalonians that has been generally unchallenged.
 - B. Reasons proposed to reject Paul's authorship include:
 1. The letter contains many words not found in other Pauline letters.
 2. The style is a stereotype of 1st Thessalonians.
 3. Its tone is formal rather than exuding a warm nature as in 1st Thessalonians.
 4. Paul's view of the antichrist is unique in the N.T. and thus not of Pauline origin.
 5. The eschatology of the two letters is supposedly inconsistent.
 - C. These reasons can be easily and logically dismissed:
 1. As to Paul's vocabulary, 1st Thessalonians had its share of unique words (at least 8 hapax's) and any uniqueness otherwise can be explained as to the subject matter being written.
 2. Any stereotypical styles between the two letters are a matter of continued emphasis originating in 1st Thessalonians and still an issue when penning 2nd Thessalonians e.g., facing continued persecution (2The.1:4 cp.1The.1:6).
 3. Its formal or more distant tone is easily understood when related to the emotional circumstances in the first letter and the developed problems prompting the second.
 4. The reference to antichrist is not unique in the N.T. (Cf.1Joh.2:18,22; 4:3; 2Joh.1:7; Rev.6:1ff; 13:1ff; etc.), though Paul's insight may be exclusive.
 5. However, so were some of his details on the Rapture in 1The.4:16-17 and this did not make it any less Pauline.
 6. Any eschatological confusion seen between the 2 letters is a matter of interpretation, not inspiration (some say Paul thought the rapture could happen at any time in the CA [misinterpretation of the oratorical "we" in 1The.4:15] and now in 2Thess.2:2-3 he says "not so").
 - D. External evidence of the early Church validates Paul's authorship.
 1. The early Church fathers, Polycarp, Ignatius and Justin recognized it (1st – 2nd Centuries).
 2. It is included in the Marcionite canon (140 AD) and Muratorian Fragment (200 AD).
 3. Irenaeus (115-202 AD) quoted it by name.
 - E. Internal evidence of Pauline origin includes:
 1. Paul's continued reference to Silvanus and Timothy would be expected since all 3 were essential in the founding of this local church. 2The.1:1 cp.1The.1:1
 2. Paul makes a direct reference to himself in 2The.3:17.
 3. Why would another author present an argument bringing attention to a potential forgery if he is trying to submit a forgery? Cp.2The.2:2
 4. The vocabulary, style, phraseology and theology are as clearly Pauline as 1st Thessalonians.
 - F. Paul penned this 2nd letter not too long after 1st Thessalonians both from Corinth in mid to late 52 AD during his second missionary journey (~51-53 AD).

- II.** Occasion and purpose for writing.
- A.** As with the 1st epistle, Paul continues encouragement to persevere in the face of testing.
 - B.** However, the immediate occasion for writing is two-fold: To counter false teaching that they were exposed to respecting the Day of the Lord and to deal with those that refused to work.
 - C.** General characteristics of the letter include:
 - 1.** This is the shortest of Paul's nine letters to churches.
 - 2.** The church continued to face intense persecution from society.
 - 3.** Believers continued to exhibit love to each other.
 - 4.** They are promised vindication at the Parousia of Christ.
 - 5.** They were exposed to fraudulent teaching that they were in the Tribulation.
 - 6.** Paul employs sub-benedictions as in 1Thessalonians to sub-divide the letter. 2The.2:16-17; 3:16 cp.1The.3:11-13; 5:23-24
 - 7.** Paul tells believers to separate from believers that refuse to work and otherwise refuse to follow his teaching in these letters.
- III.** Outline:
- A.** Introduction. 1:1,2
 - 1.** Salutation from the missionary team. Vs.1a
 - 2.** Recipients. Vs.1b
 - 3.** Blessing. Vs.2
 - B.** Encouragement in the face of continued persecution. 1:3-12
 - 1.** Thankfulness and commendation for perseverance. Vss.3,4
 - 2.** Explaining why believers face persecution. Vss.5-10
 - 3.** Intercession for continued +V. Vss.11,12
 - C.** Correction concerning the Day of the Lord. 2:1-12
 - 1.** Embracing false teaching leads to emotional and mental conflict. Vss.1,2
 - 2.** Details of the proper eschatology and pertinent signs recalled. Vss.3-12
 - D.** Thanksgiving for their +V. 2:13-14
 - E.** Call to stay +V. 2:15
 - F.** Sub-benediction. 2:16-17
 - G.** Prayer request and confession of confidence. 3:1-5
 - H.** Paul's directive to separate from the "unruly". 3:6-15
 - I.** Sub-benediction. 3:16
 - J.** Authentication and formal benediction. 3:17-18