

1. INTRODUCTION:

- a. Author: As with 1st Thessalonians, Pauline authorship is well established both internally and externally, and there is no sufficient cause to doubt Paul's authorship; further, there is no reasonable alternative author proposed.
- b. Historical Background: See the information listed in 1st Thessalonians which pertains equally to 2nd Thessalonians.
- c. Date and Purpose of Writing: The majority of Biblical scholars through the ages have agreed that 2nd Thessalonians was written by Paul while he was ministering in Corinth. The actual date ranges anywhere from a few months after to a year after 1st Thessalonians; therefore the date is about 51-52 AD.
- d. Themes:
 - i. Persecution – It may seem counter intuitive to some, but Scripture has been consistent in affirming that God's people will always be in conflict with the Fallen worldly order. The Amplified Version of the Bible states this reality in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace *and* confidence. In the world, you [will always] have tribulation *and* trials *and* distress *and* frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, be certain and undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of its power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]" **As a consequence, suffering for our faith will occur in one form or another – 3:3; 4:1, 10; 5:11.**
 - ii. Jesus' Second Coming [the Parousia] – Jesus promised that He would return for His people. Jesus' resurrection is THE SIGN sealing His promise to return and that all His followers will be resurrected and be like Him and with Him always (John 14:3). We don't know, however, exactly when He will return, so we always need to be ready – 5:2, 3. This is the message of Jesus' teaching about the end of the age at Jesus' second coming in Matthew 24:36-51, and of the parables of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) and of the Servant and the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30).
 - iii. Christian Living – while we await our Lord's return, there are three directives:
 1. To live quiet, respectful, holy and productive lives -4:1-12.
 2. To encourage and help others, and to be patient and kind with everyone – 5:14.
 3. To understand that while a moral life is not a precondition for coming to faith in Christ and acceptance by God, that living an immoral lifestyle is fundamentally irreconcilable with Christian faith.

2. STRUCTURAL OUTLINE #1 – Zondervan's Archaeological Study Bible:

- a. Greeting, thanksgiving, and Prayer – Chapter 1

Bible Survey – NT 3.9 – Epistles – 2nd Thessalonians

- i. 1:1-2 – Greeting
- ii. 1:3-10 – Thanksgiving for the Thessalonian's perseverance under persecution
- iii. 1:11-12 – Intercession for continued growth and fruitfulness
- b. Instruction regarding Jesus' 2nd coming and Christian conduct – Chapter 2
 - i. 2:1-12 – The man of lawlessness
 - ii. 2:13-15 – Admonition to stand firm
 - iii. 2:16-17 – Prayer for God's enabling
- c. Request for prayer and warning against idleness – Chapter 3
 - i. 3:1-13 – Paul's request for himself
 - ii. 3:4-15 – Warning about laziness and idleness
 - iii. 3:16-18 – Final greetings and benediction

3. STRUCTURAL OUTLINE #2 – Dr Gary Tuck:

- a. 1:1-2 – Introductory Salutation
- b. 1:3-12 – Paul's encouragement of the Thessalonian's faith
 - i. Thanksgiving for their Spiritual growth – 1:3-4
 - 1. Vs 3 – Growing in faith and love
 - 2. Vs 4 – Faith and endurance in persecution and trials
 - ii. Consolation is coming in the final judgment – 1:5-10
 - 1. Vs 5 – Suffering now for the Kingdom of God
 - 2. Vs 6-7 – God's future judgment will vindicate them
 - 3. Vs 8-10 – Outcome of the judgment – destruction for the lost, and glorification of Christ in His saints
 - iii. Prayer for God's favor – 1:11-12
- c. 2:1-12 – Correct Eschatology
 - i. The coming Day of the Lord – 2:1-5
 - 1. Vs 1-2 – Appeal for calm wisdom amid false claims
 - 2. Vs 3-4 – The coming rebellion of the man of lawlessness
 - 3. Vs 5 – Reminder of past instructions
 - ii. The Lawless One – 2:6-12
 - 1. Vs 6-7 – Restraint of the man of lawlessness
 - 2. Vs 8-9 – Revelation of the man of lawlessness
 - 3. Vs 10-12 – Deception, delusion, and condemnation
- d. 2:13-17 – Renewed encouragement for the faithful
 - i. Thanksgiving for them – 2:13-14
 - ii. Encouragement to hold firmly – 2:15
 - iii. Prayer for strength – 2:16-17
- e. 3:1-15 – Practical Exhortations

- i. Request for Prayer – 3:1-2
- ii. God's Faithfulness is Encouraging – 3:3-5
- iii. Discipline a necessity for the Lazy – 3:6-15
 - 1. Vs 6 – The church should discipline its congregation
 - 2. Vs 7-10 – Paul's apostolic example of hard and fruitful work
 - 3. Vs 11-12 – Paul's command to the lazy
 - 4. Vs 13 – Encouragement of the diligent
 - 5. Vs 14-15 – Discipline for the lazy
- f. 3:16-18 – Benediction

4. **THE MESSAGE OF 2ND THESSALONIANS – EXEGESIS** – Roughly following Dr. Tuck's outline and including word translation content from Zondervan's New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words:

- a. 1:1-2 – Paul's customary greeting begins with his ministry partners, then includes the church for whom they are ministering, and then focuses upon God in whose name and power they serve. Paul from the beginning references Grace and Peace as two of the unique gifts of the Spirit we receive in Christ that are not something the world can provide.
 - i. **Grace** - In the Greek language, "grace" is *charis*. It means a gracious favor or benefit bestowed, and at the same time it means the gratitude appropriate to the grace received. The verb *charizomai* means "to show kindness or favor." The concept came to include both the gracious action of God as well as agreeable human qualities.
 - 1. **In Old Testament** – The religious Jew relied on his physical descent from Abraham and on his knowledge of the law. Relationship with God was considered an issue of ritual piety and obedience to the letter of the law. The religious man had a claim on God, established by membership in the covenant community and based on his own merits. The sense of helplessness that moved the psalmist to call out to God, pleading only that the Lord show mercy and stoop to meet his needs, was replaced in the religious life of the Pharisees by a smug sense of self-righteousness.
 - 2. **In New Testament** – The apostle Paul was thoroughly trained in this way of thinking and in rabbinical interpretation. But he was dramatically converted to Christ on the Damascus road and was driven to reexamine the beliefs of a lifetime. His perspective on a person's relationship with God was transformed, and as Paul was committed to missionary work, he was driven to the word "grace" for a way to express the vital difference between human attempts to win God's favor and the way in which personal relationship with God is actually established and developed.

3. In the Church Age – The affirmations Grace makes about God and human beings stand in bold contrast to the normal human approaches to relationship with the Lord. Grace holds that human beings are helpless, so locked in sin that their state can only be represented as death. Grace declares that God is merciful and loving and that he is able to act to meet our deepest need. Grace teaches that God has acted in Jesus to bring us forgiveness and new life through his atoning sacrifice on Calvary. Because of motives rooted deeply within his own character, God has reached out in Jesus to save sinners.

ii. Peace:

- 1. In the Old Covenant** – The Hebrew word for "peace" is *shalom*. It is derived from a root that conveys the image of wholeness, unity, and harmony--- something that is complete and sound. Although "peace" is essentially a relational concept in the Old Testament, it also conveys the idea of prosperity, health, and fulfillment.
- 2. In the New Covenant** – The Greek culture the word *eirene* originally referred to that orderly, prosperous life that is possible when there is no war. Only much later did philosophers begin to apply the concept to an inner, personal peace. But the New Testament use of *eirene* (90 occurrences) does not reflect the culture of the Greeks. Instead, "peace" in the New Testament is defined and enriched by the Old Testament's *shalom*. In every theologically significant use, "peace" is something rooted in one's relationship with God and testifies to the restoration of human beings to inner harmony and to harmonious relationships with others. Our once-shattered lives are again made whole, and we become in Christ what God originally intended us to be. The vital health and wholeness of a restored humanity is available in Jesus.
- 3. In the Church** – First and foremost, the peace human beings need is peace with God. This is ours in Jesus; "since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Ephesians 2:14 adds that Jesus "Himself is our peace." God's peace may be an inner experience, but the wholeness that is suggested by *shalom/eirene* is also visibly expressed in the believing community. Among God's people, peace means that hostility has been replaced by unity (Ephesians 2:14-17; 4:3). It means order and harmony (1 Corinthians 14:33). It means a commitment to harmony that is as much the Christian's calling as is holiness (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Timothy 2:22).
- 4. In the World** – Though these aspects of peace are now available both personally and corporately among believers, Jesus and the New Testament

writers had no expectations that peace would prevail in the present world order – John 16:33; 1 Peter 5:9; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 2:15; 4:4.

- b. 1:3-4 – The result of the presence of the Spirit is demonstrated in the outworking of Grace and Peace as Faith and Love develop in the community of believers, resulting in their endurance amid persecution and trials. Paul sounds very similar to James here in his affirmations of the Spiritual transformation that faith and love grow out of the fertile ground of trials and perseverance. “Endurance” is from a number of Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "endure" or "endurance." The New Testament terms especially suggest patient waiting, but they do not imply passivity. Endurance is inspired by hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3). The believer finds an inner strength that enables one to hold up under persecutions and hardship (2 Timothy 2:3; 3:10). Although it is through God that endurance develops (Romans 15:5), patient endurance remains one of the virtues by which Christian character can be measured (2 Corinthians 1:6; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 3:10; Titus 2:2).**
- c. 1:5-10 – This Spiritual process of transformation outlined in verses 3-4 Paul claims as evidence that God’s righteous judgment will vindicate Christ followers in the Kingdom of God. In essence, their perseverance and faithfulness is proof positive that God gives strength enough to face the persecutions and trials, and that such a person living victoriously demonstrates that God’s "judgment is right." It is understood but unstated that withstanding present pressures necessarily demonstrates the rightness of God's future judgment.**
- i. The phrase about righteous judgment here sets the tone for 1:5b-10, which describes what is to come in the Kingdom of God. As used in this context, God’s Judgment here is less about the “courtroom judicial verdict” of right or wrong, than it is about the proper evaluative process of understanding the motives involved in human actions. God’s sense of justice is inherent in His character, and He will stand for His people against those that meant them harm.**
 - ii. 1:6 – Paul teaches that we don’t have to be discouraged about the wrongs we suffer, God will punish the evil doers and serial wrong doers:**
 - 1. Deuteronomy 32:35 “It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them.”**
 - 2. Romans 12:19 “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”**
 - 3. Hebrews 10:30 “For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people’.”**
- d. 1:11-12 – Paul ends this long introduction with an encouraging prayer reminding this church of their high calling in Christ and knowing He will reward their faith.**

- e. 2:1-12 – Paul addresses the false teachings that the “Day of the Lord” had already occurred and since they had been left behind they were forsaken. Paul doesn’t mince words... this is the work of the anti-Christ who he calls the “man of lawlessness.”
- i. Paul assures this church not to be shaken by these rumors of the Return having happened, there will be NO DOUBT when Jesus returns!
 - ii. All will see it, and all will respond – they will either rejoice or mourn – there will be no middle ground.
 - iii. The “Day of the Lord” will follow apostasy and the “man of lawlessness” will be revealed. Paul uses the prophecy in Dan 7-11.
 - iv. Paul is teaching that the people of God will sign a treaty with the antichrist who will promise peace. Daniel 9:27 says of the anti-Christ who will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to worship [sacrifice and offering], and on a wing of the temple he will set up an “abomination that causes desolation” until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.
 1. “Peace at any price” is a false peace – and billions of people will fall for it. It is important to understand that Fallen-earth is not our ultimate home, believer’s true home is in eternity with God. Don’t trade eternity for a temporal promise that will not be honored.
 2. Jesus warns us not to fall for the false prophets and messiahs in His Olivet Discourse.
 3. When Israel falls in with the false messiah/antichrist having rejected the true Messiah, that is the apostasy that is referenced here.
 - v. 2:7-12 – The power of the antichrist which is now being restrained will be released when the restrainer is removed [most likely the Holy Spirit will allow him to act]. This will allow the antichrist to be revealed and to act for a short time. Which refers to the buildup to and early years of the Tribulation, at which time Jesus will come and rescue His Church. See this article on the AD website on “Eschatology” for more detailed thoughts about the end-times - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/1-biblical-literacy/Bible%20Survey%20-%20Apocalyptic%201.3%20-%20Eschatology,%20Millenianism%20&%20the%20Rapture.pdf>
- f. 2:13-17 – This passage is very similar to the introduction in realigning their thoughts and focus upon the eternal rather than the temporal. Christians have a secure future with Christ in eternity.
- i. Vs 13-14 looks more upon the divine side of salvation Grace, where the introduction reference tends to focus more on the human response to persevere knowing God is faithful.
 - ii. Vs 15-17 Paul’s advice and prayer speak of the stability of life that emerges when believers focus on God’s Grace.

- g. 3:1-15 – Paul provides three exhortations to this Church:**
 - i. Vs 1-2 – Paul invites them into prayerful partnership with him in his ministry. Again, the focus is inviting the church into bigger picture of what God is doing, rather than the myopic view of people focused upon their own fears or distress.**
 - ii. Vs 3 – Paul reaffirms his confidence in God’s faithfulness.**
 - iii. Vs 4-5 – Paul seeks to re-enforce and strengthen the faith and confidence of the Church.**
 - iv. Vs 3:6-12 – Disciplined partnership in ministry is again encouraged. This admonition was to counter false ministers [these were actually preacher bums] who didn’t support themselves and were being fed at the expense of the faithful. These false teachers are easily recognizable because they are in it for themselves. A true shepherd would rather go hungry than take from needy sheep.**
 - v. Vs 13 – “as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.” Never give up and become tired of doing what you know to be the right thing.**
 - vi. Vs 14-15 – those who fail to act properly should be restored and Paul provides a logical means for restoration.**
 - vii. Vs 16-18 – Benediction.**