

2 Thessalonians

Follow-Up	Unlike 1-2 Corinthians, where the letters deal with different types of issues, 1-2 Thessalonians have a flow to them. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians because he had to leave them in haste and wanted to encourage them in the midst of persecution and give them instructions about the Lord's return. In 2 Thessalonians, Paul writes because the persecution had grown <u>more</u> intense, and people were <u>more</u> confused about the 2 nd Coming in light of what he wrote previously.
Purpose	2 Thessalonians, then, was Paul's way of addressing the further persecutions and to provide more information about the Lord's return in light of the Thessalonians confusion that came from the previous letter.
Two Important Additions	With regard to the Lord's return, Paul includes with 2 Thessalonians something he didn't in the first letter: A discussion about a future figure that he calls the "Man of Lawlessness." John calls him the "Anti-Christ." They are the same person. At the end of 2 Thessalonians, Paul discusses idleness. It may seem out of place when you first read it, but it is not. Some of the church members in Thessalonica were sitting around doing nothing because they were just waiting on the Lord's return (in light of what he previously wrote). As a result, Paul tells them, essentially, to "get to work" and "quit being lazy."
A Uniquely Odd Feature	In the second to last verse in 2 Thessalonians, Paul writes "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write." (3:17). This gives us a clue about a problem going on in Thessalonica. There were some in Thessalonica deliberately misleading them. Though that's a frequent problem Paul encountered (Galatia), in Thessalonica it had gone to another level. These false teachers were forging letters to make them look as if they had come from Paul. As a result, Paul took time in his letter to make sure the Thessalonians understood not only his view of the End Times, but also what his handwriting looked like.
Reason for the Odd Feature	They were forging letters and making them appear to be Paul's words because they were trying to convince the Thessalonians that the Day of the Lord had already come. Paul writes 2 Thessalonians to tell them it had not. If the Day of the Lord had come, the Thessalonians would have been in despair because they were being persecuted. So, Paul writes to tell them the time of future tribulation had not yet come because the "man of lawlessness" had not yet been revealed.
In Two Phrases	1. Return (like 1 Thessalonians) 2. Man of Lawlessness
Key Verse	<i>Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. (2:3)</i>
Structure	(ch1) Hope in the Midst of Persecution; (ch2) The Day of the Lord Further Explained; (ch3) Challenge to the Idle. The end of each section is marked by a short closing prayer.

Hope in the Midst of Persecution (ch 1)

When Paul learns that the persecution has increased, he gets worried that they might give up on Jesus. So, he writes to tell them that suffering is a way of participating in the Kingdom of God and participating in the life of Jesus.

It's Good from God's Perspective ³ *We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters,^[L] and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.* ⁴ *Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.* ⁵ *All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering (1:3-5)*

God Will Do Something About Those Who Cause It ⁶ *God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.* ⁹ *They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might!¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you because you believed our testimony to you (1:6-10)*

¹¹ *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.* ¹² *We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:11-12)*

The Day of the Lord Further Explained (ch 2)

In 1 Thess., Paul explained in great detail what will happen in the future when the trumpet of the Lord sounds. He did this because there were so many in Thessalonica grieving the loss of those who were martyred. “Don’t grieve like the rest of mankind,” Paul says. God will make it right in the end. But in 2 Thess., Paul goes into greater detail because (a) the last letter left people confused, and (b) false teachers were saying the Day of the Lord had already come.

It Hasn’t Happened Yet	<i>Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, and sisters, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. (2:1-2)</i>
It Won’t Happen Until the Anti-Christ is Revealed	<i>³ Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will <u>oppose</u> and will <u>exalt himself</u> over everything that is called God or is worshiped, <u>so that he sets himself up in God’s temple</u>, proclaiming himself to be God (2:3-4).</i>
The Anti-Christ Will Be a Way God Gives the World What They Want	<i>⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will <u>be in accordance with how Satan works</u>. He will use all sorts of <u>displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie</u>, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. <u>They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved</u>. ¹¹ For this reason <u>God sends them a powerful delusion</u> so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have <u>not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness</u>. (2:8-12)</i>
<i>¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word (2:16-17).</i>	

The Challenge to the Idle (ch3)

The Thessalonians were so consumed with the fact that the Day of the Lord/Return of Jesus Christ could come at any moment that they stopped working and being productive. They just sat around, being idle, waiting for it to happen. Paul writes here to correct this type of thinking that leads to idleness.

Idle Company Produces Idle Character	<i>⁶ In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching^[a] you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” (3:6-10)</i>
Busy vs Busybodies	<i>¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. ¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. ¹³ And as for you, brothers, and sisters, never tire of doing what is good. (3:11-13)</i>
<i>¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. ¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (3:16-18)</i>	