

17. The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

I. Introduction: Why "the second". Really "second".

II. Pseudepigraphic Letter (1:1) Why it is considered to be epigraphic

A slavish imitation of First Thessalonians. The opening (1:1-2) Its structure
General Structure (b) The double thanksgiving. The first (1:2 ...)? The second with
a wish prayer (2:13-17) (c) The three-fold wish prayer (2:16; 3:5, 16) Same
themes, with a little shift of language, for example "beloved by the Lord" (2:13)
The emphasis on writing

Don't be shaken (2:2) Traditions taught by word of mouth or by letter (2:15) 3) Pay
attention to this letter (3:14). This is how I write in all my letters (3:16-17). The
reason why 2 Thessalonians was written. The expectation of an imminent Parousia
(1 Thess 1:10; 4:15, 17) The "delay" of the Parousia

III. The Double Thanksgiving: The first, which ends with a prayer that is not a
wish prayer (1:2-12) A word of thanksgiving (1:3) Paul's boast about the church in
affliction (1:4) The afflictions. The purpose of the afflictions (1:5) God's
vengeance on the afflictors, described in apocalyptic terms (1:6-10) A prayer
(1:11-12)

The second with a wish prayer (2:13-17) The Thessalonians' election and call
(2:13-14) Exhortation to hold fast to the traditions by word and by letter (2:15) The
wish prayer (2:16-17)

IV. The Eschatological Scenario, formally introduced in 2:1 (2:1-11)

Eschatology, a product of religious imagination. The time-table, an apocalyptic
motif. The rebellion and the lawless one. Restraint of the lawless one until he is
revealed. Mystery of lawlessness is at work in the meantime. His coming is
apparent in the work of Satan. Power, signs, and (lying) wonders (2:9)
Deception, allowed by God for those who do not believe the truth, who are
perishing. Revelation of the lawless one who will be annihilated by the Lord Jesus
Christ at manifestation of his coming {epiphaneia tes parousias)

Two puzzling features of the scenario. The lawless one, who sat in the temple of
God and declared himself to be god (2:4) 2) The restrainer.

V. The Exhortation against Being Unruly (ataktoi) (3:6-13)

Review Questions

1. Why do most scholars think that 2 Thessalonians was not written by Paul?
2. What is the relationship between 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians?
3. What does the "letter" teach us about the final times?