

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 70 – 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:4

Day 346: Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians seems to have been written shortly after the first (see introduction to 1 Thessalonians).

It would seem that Paul's first letter was mistakenly understood by some to imply that the second coming of Christ had already occurred. Hence Paul writes to correct this misunderstanding. Most of the letter is taken up with instruction concerning the Second coming and with how to deal with those who remain idle.

Referenced Works

- John Eadie *A Comentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*, MacMillan, London, 1877
- Leon Morris *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1991

Day 347: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Verse 1

Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ·

The opening address is practically identical with that of 1 Thessalonians.

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church
πατηρ, πατρος m father

Verse 2

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς [ἡμῶν] καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

χαρις, ιτος see 1 Thess 5:28
εἰρηνη, ης see 1 Thess 5:23

On the close conjunction of the Father and the Lord Jesus as the source of grace and peace Wilson comments, "That such a construction could be used without comment not only implies the writer's belief in the deity of Christ, but also takes the reader' acknowledgment of it for granted."

Verse 3

Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν, ὅτι ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καὶ πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἐνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους,

Verses 3-10 are one sentence in the Greek – they are the complex expression of a single thought.

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks
ὀφειλω owe, ought, be bound or obligated

παντοτε always

ἀξιος, α, ον worthy, fitting

ὑπεραυξανω grow abundantly

Implies vigorous growth.

πλεοναζω intrans increase, grow

Compare 1 Thess 3:10 & 12. Paul's concerns had been answered.

ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

ἀλληλων, οις, ους see 1 Thess 5:15

Verse 4

ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως ἐν πάσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν αἷς ἀνέχεσθε,

ὥστε so that, with the result that

ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι Verb, pres midd/pass dep infin

ἐγκαυχαομαι boast

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Cf. 1 Thess 1:3.

διωγμος, ου m persecution
θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering
ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

The present tense here highlights the continuing nature of the persecution.

Day 348: 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Verse 5

ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ,
εἰς τὸ καταξιωθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας
τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε,

ἔνδειγμα, τος n evidence, proof

Morris argues that it is not their suffering of persecution but rather their faith in the face of such persecution which is the demonstration of the righteous judgment of God by which they will attain to eternal life – though suffering is also a means by which God prepares his people for glory.

It may, however, be better to understand the righteous judgment of God as that judgment by which he accounts these Thessalonians to be among his people – worthy of his kingdom not by some act of theirs (worthiness) but by God's own judicial act. The fact that they are included among the children of God is made evident also in that they are facing suffering for the sake of the kingdom. The judgment of God by which they are accounted his people will also be manifest in the punishment of those who persecute them (cf. v6f, also Phil 1:28).

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
κρισις, εως f judgement, act of
judgement
καταξιωθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin
καταξιοω count worthy, make worthy
πασχω suffer, experience

Verse 6

εἴπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι
τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν

εἴπερ since, if it is true that, seeing that
παρα preposition with dat with, in the
presence of

ἀνταποδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin
ἀνταποδιδωμι repay, return
θλίβουσιν Verb, pres act ptc, m & n dat pl
θλιβω press hard, crush
θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

Verse 7

καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ'
ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ
ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως
αὐτοῦ

ἀνεσις, εως f relief
ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

Emphasises that the Lord is currently hidden from the world but that he will, on that day, be revealed in glory.

ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ "Possibly the expression implies that they are to be the agents of the divine will. But the main idea is that they are angels that belong to his power." Morris

Verse 8

ἐν πυρὶ φλογός, διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς
μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν
τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ,

πυρ, ος n fire
φλοξ, φλογος f flame

The phrase 'in flaming fire' probably belongs with the words that precede it, i.e. v.7, rather than with v.8. It is part of the picture of the Lord's glory cf. Ex 3:2; Is 66:15; Rev 1:13,14.

διδωμι give
ἐκδικησις, εως f retribution, rendering of
justice, punishment

Cf. Rom 12:19 where Dt 32:35 is quoted but applied to Christ. "It is yet another example of the ease with which the church, from the very first, assigned to Christ the functions that the Old Testament reserved for Yahweh." Morris

εἶδοδιν ptc οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand
ὑπακουω obey, be subject to
εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

The use of two definite articles could suggest that two different groups may be in mind. Some think that Paul refers separately to Gentiles and Jews. Morris thinks that Paul is using poetic parallelism and that there is no clear distinction between two groups.

Verse 9

οἵτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον
ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς
δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ,

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ
τι who, which, whoever, whichever
δικη, ης f punishment, divine justice
τίσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl τινω
undergo, suffer

ὄλεθρος, ου m destruction, ruin

ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον "Does not signify so much annihilation as the loss of all that is worthwhile, utter ruin... It indicates that separation from the Lord which is the final disaster." Morris

ἰσχυς, υος f strength

Verse 10

ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, ὅτι ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as ἐνδοξασθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin ἐνδοξαζομαι receive glory, be honoured

An infinitive of purpose.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God

"It seems that he is saying that those who are in Christ and in whom Christ dwells will by virtue of that fact share in his glory. On the great day it is not only the Lord himself who will be glorious, but his glory will also be seen in the saints." Morris

θαυμασθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin θαυμάζω wonder, be amazed ἐπιστεύθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s πιστευω

μαρτυριον, ου n testimony, witness ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, he, she, it

Morris suggests that prefixing the words ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ with such words as 'you will be among them' brings out Paul's sense.

Day 349: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Verse 11

εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιωσῇ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρωσῇ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,

εἰς ὃ 'with this in mind.' Morris thinks loosely attached to the whole of the previous section.

προσευχομαι pray πάντοτε always ἀξιῶ consider worthy κλησις, εως f call, calling

"We must bear in mind that when people are called they are completely unworthy of this call (Gal 1:13-15 is perhaps a classic instance of this). But God does not intend that they should continue in such a state. They are to walk worthily of the calling wherewith he calls them (Eph 4:1). It is this that Paul has in mind here." Morris

πληρωω fulfill, bring about, accomplish εὐδοκία, ας f good will, pleasure, desire ἀγαθωσύνη, ης f goodness

καὶ πληρωσῇ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης 'and fulfilling every good purpose.' Morris thinks "Paul is praying that God will produce a goodness of will in his friends. The parallelism with 'work of faith' indicates that the meaning is 'resolve proceeding from goodness,' rather than 'a resolve after goodness' or 'a resolve to do good.' Parallel is 'act prompted by your faith.' 'Every,' which precedes 'desire of goodness,' is rightly taken with this phrase also... Faith is always busy. A true faith will clothe itself in works."

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

Verse 12

ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῇ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ὅπως (οἱ ὅπως ἄν) that, in order that ἐνδοξαζομαι see v.10

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, reputation

'Name' stands for the whole person. The intent is that "The Thessalonians will be such a bright and shining testimony to the reality of their salvation that the Saviour will be seen to be the wonderful Being he is." Morris

καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ "On that day, just as he will be glorified in them on account of what they have become, so they will be glorified in him on account of what he is... The language is that of Isa 66:5 (LXX), but there 'the Lord' is Yahweh. This is another example of the tendency of the New Testament writers to speak of the Lord Jesus in language used of Yahweh in the Old Testament." Morris

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

Day 350: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**Verse 1**

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν,

2 Thess 2:1-12 is one of the most obscure passages in the New Testament. Paul is writing to supplement what he had taught them when present with them (v.5). Our ignorance of what Paul had taught them earlier makes it difficult for us to be certain of the meaning of these verses which are so full of references to his earlier teaching. For one treatment of this see G Vos *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, 1953) pp. 94-133.

ἔρωταω ask, request, beg, urge

The single definite article indicates that one event is being spoken of.

παρουσια, ας see 1 Thess 2:19

ἐπισυναγωγή, ης f assembling, gathering

Cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18.

Verse 2

εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν, ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου.

ταχέως adv. (formed from ταχυς) quickly, at once, soon

The thought here is 'precipitately' cf. 1 Tim 5:22.

σαλευθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin σαλευω shake, disturb

νοῦς, νοός, νοί, νοῦν m mind, thought, reason, purpose, understanding

Here stands for the whole mental balance of the person.

μηδε negative particle nor, and not, not even; μηδε ... μηδε neither ... nor θροεομαι be alarmed, startled

Cf. Mk 13:7.

μητε and not; μητε ... μητε neither ... nor

"He speaks of three possible ways in which they may be affected. 'Spirit' ... must be understood in the light of the fact that the early church expected supernatural communications from time to time, for example, through the ministry of prophets (cf. 1 Cor 14:29-30; 1 John 4:1). It means some revelation divinely communicated. Paul, of course, encouraged the right use of prophecy (1 Thess 5:19-20), but here the content of the supposed prophecy showed that it could not have come from God. 'Report' ... may refer to a sermon, though the term is broad enough to cover all sorts of oral communications." Morris

ἐπιστολή, ης f letter

"It indicates that Paul feared that a communication of some kind had been reputed to have come from him (and his assistants?). But he writes in general terms, and we are probably justified in inferring that he was not quite sure of exactly what had happened. Either that, or else he felt it not wise to refer to it too directly. But he is making quite clear that he accepts no responsibility whatever for the report. However it had come, and however it had been attributed to him, he had had nothing to do with it. He does not want his friends to be worried by these speculations, and he completely renounces them." Morris

ἐνέστηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐνίστημι be present, perf had come

"To say that the day of the Lord had come did not mean that it was completed and that all the glorious events associated with it had occurred. That was so obviously untrue that it needed no refutation. What it did mean was that the day had dawned. They were even then living in it. This being so, the climax must infallibly be reached, and that within a short space of time." Morris

Verse 3

μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον· ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,

ἐξαπατήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3s

ἐξαπαταω deceive, lead astray
μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing
τροπος, ου m way, manner; κατα
μηδενα τ. in no way

ἐὰν μη unless

Requires the addition of some such phrase as 'that day will not come unless ...'

ἀποστασία, ας f apostasy, rebellion

The inclusion of the definite article implies that Paul is referring to *the* rebellion about which he had already spoken to them. "Paul's thought is that in the last times there will be an outstanding manifestation of the powers of evil arrayed against God ... It is as though Satan were throwing all his forces into one last despairing effort." Morris

ἀποκαλυφθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
ἀποκαλύπτω reveal, disclose
ἀνομία, ας f wickedness, lawlessness,
sin

Concerning the rival readings ἀνομίας and ἁμαρτίας (so TR), Metzger writes, "Despite the broader external testimony supporting ἁμαρτίας, on the whole it appears that the early Alexandrian witnesses preserve the original reading, ἀνομίας, a word rarely used by Paul, which was altered by copyists to the much more frequently used word, ἁμαρτίας. Furthermore, γὰρ ... ἀνομίας in v.7 seems to presuppose ἀνομίας here."

ἄπωλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin

It is not clear who this individual might be but it will be an outstanding manifestation of the powers of evil – Antichrist. "All attempts to equate the Man of Lawlessness with historical personages break down of the fact that Paul was writing of someone who would appear only at the end of the age; the Man of Lawlessness is an eschatological figure. Paul wrote that he will appear just before the Lord comes again, and therefore it seems futile to try to identify him. Scripture tells us that there are many Antichrists (1 John 2:18), and it does not surprise us accordingly that through the ages of history many have appeared whose evil lives remind us of this or that trait of the Man of Lawlessness. But that does not give us grounds for identifying the supreme embodiment of evil with any of Satan's lesser lights along the way." Morris

Verse 4

ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ
πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε
αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει,
ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.

ἀντικεῖμαι oppose, be against
ὑπεραιρομαι be puffed up with pride; rise
in pride (ἐπι) against
σεβασμα, τος n sacred thing, object of
worship, place of worship
ὥστε so that, with the result that
ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary, inner part
of Jewish Temple

"While the temple is not easy to identify, the best way to understand the passage seems to be that some material building will serve as the setting for the blasphemous claim to deity that the Man of Lawlessness will make as the climax of his activities." Morris

καθίζω intrans sit down, sit
ἀποδεικνύντα Verb, pres act ptc, m acc s
ἀποδεικνυμι claim, set forth
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

Satan's great desire is to dethrone God. "Most commentators draw attention to the attempt by Caligula to set up an image of himself in the temple at Jerusalem, an attempt that was frustrated only by his death. This took place in AD 40. The attempt aroused widespread horror among the Jews. It may well be that Paul has this incident in mind in writing these words, but we should bear in mind that what he says goes beyond anything Caligula attempted. The Man of Lawlessness is not pictured as setting up a statue of himself but as taking his seat in person (cf. Ezek 28:2)." Morris