

2 Thessalonians

Week 1 Background and Introduction to the Letter

January 10, 2024

2 Thessalonians 1:1-10

The city of Thessalonica was founded in 315 BC and named after Alexander the Great's half-sister, Thessalonike, who was married to the king of Macedon. When Paul went to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey, it was a trading hub in the Roman Empire with about 200,000 people living there. Paul's 1st visit is recorded in Acts 17:1-9.

This letter was written by Paul, within a year after his first letter to them. This would date to the early 50's AD. From the content of the letter Paul was writing for a couple of reasons. He had apparently received word about them, and he commended them for their perseverance and faith in the face of persecution. But he also wrote because he became aware of false teachings that had arisen among them concerning the return of Jesus.

1. Greeting. Verses 1-3

The letter is from the entire missionary team of Paul, Silas and Timothy. They offer thanks to God because the Thessalonians growing faith and their love for one another. This is spiritual progress. When choosing to follow Jesus, there will be steady maturing process started in the life of each individual and hence the entire church. Psalm 1.

Psalm 1 likens the blessed (healthy) person as one like a tree planted by water, How does a healthy tree develop and stay healthy?

What are signs of a tree that is unhealthy?

How does this relate to the life of a Christian? _____

2. The reputation of the Thessalonian Church vs. 4

The church was healthy while enduring persecution and trials. They persevered in their faith. What do you think this perseverance or endurance looked like? If you and I were to go back in time and visit our brothers and sisters there, what would we experience?

Ps. 46:10; Phil 4:4-7

3. God's work in the persecuted church. Vs. 5-8

- a. **Evidence:** That they were faithful to Christ was evidence that God's choosing for them to face troubles was good. Acts 14:21-23
- b. **Worthy of the Kingdom:** Suffering for Christ is part of being in Christ. "Suffering is not to be thought of as evidence that God has forsaken them, but evidence that he is with them, perfecting them." – John MacArthur. 2 Corinthians 12:2-10
- c. **God will pay back evil and give relief to the righteous.** Vs. 8 For those who pursue God's people to do harm- their future is distress-forever. For God's people who are in distress today, their future is relief. To endure we must look to the future. We look to our being gathered to Him and to the time when he and the armies of heaven come to bring judgment to evil. (Rev. 19:11-16)