

“The second letter to the Thessalonians – 2 Thess 1:1-5”

The first Sunday after the Epiphany – Jan 9, 2022

Holy Trinity Church - Tom Mount

Introduction to the second letter to the church in Thessalonica

- **Historical background:** Acts 17:1-9. Paul, Silas and Timothy travelled to Thessalonica from Philippi around AD 49 on Egnatian Way. After leaving Thessalonica, they continued west to Berea, then Athens (where Timothy goes back to Thessalonica to check on church), then Corinth (where Timothy rejoins them) and they write the first letter to the Thessalonians. During their 18-month stay in Corinth, they receive news about the Thessalonians and write a second letter to them.
- The city was an important one of about 200,000: a busy port city at nexus of two trade routes.
- **The flow:** The letter is structured as follows
 - Opening comments: 1:1-5 (Opening benediction: 1:2)
 1. Encouragement in tribulation: 1:6-12 (Closing prayer: 1:11-12)
 2. Clarity about the end times: 2:1-17 (Closing prayer: 2:16-17)
 3. Instruction about “idle” people: 3:1-15 (Closing prayer: 3:16)
 - Closing comments: 3:17-18 (Final benediction: 3:18)

Exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

“Paul, Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy, **SLIDE 10-three amigos**”

- **Paul**, *Paulos*, cf. Acts 9.
- **Silas**, *Silvanus*. Cf. Acts 15:22, 32.
- **Timothy**, *Timotheos*. Paul: “my beloved son” in 2 Tim 1:2.

“To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

- **“in”** – *en*. In God and Jesus. **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

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- **Grace, *charis*.** Typical Greek greeting: favor, help, delight. Cf. Ps 20:1-5.
- **Peace, *eirene*.** Hebrew, *shalom*. Peace, well-being, thriving, flourishing. Return to the Edenic order. Cornelius Plantinga: sin is a “vandalism of shalom.”
- **God our Father and the Lord Lord (*kurios* – “master”) Jesus (*Yeshua* – “salvation”) Christ (*christos* – “anointed one”).**
- Grace and peace is like the NT equivalent of the *Birkat kohanim*: Num 6:24-26.

³“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. ⁴Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. ⁵All 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.

- **Growing faith.** Cf.: 1 Thess 1:9-10.
- **Increasing love.** Cf.: 1 Thess 4:9-10.
- **Proven perseverance.** Cf. Heb 12:3-11.
- **“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.”**

Resources

- 2 Thessalonians by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/2-thessalonians/> (7:10).
- Gene L. Green. *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary, 2002).
- Charles A. Wanamaker. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (New International Greek Testament Commentary, 1990).