

2 Thessalonians

NET Bible

Salutation

1:1 From Paul¹ and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **1:2** Grace and peace to you² from God the³ Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Thanksgiving

1:3 We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters,⁴ and rightly so,⁵ because your faith flourishes more and more and the love of each one of you all for one another is ever greater. **1:4** As a result we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring.

Encouragement in Persecution

1:5 This is evidence of God's righteous judgment, to make you worthy⁶ of the kingdom of God, for which in fact you are suffering. **1:6** For it is right⁷ for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **1:7** and to you who are being afflicted to give rest together with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed⁸ from heaven with his mighty angels.⁹ **1:8** *With flaming fire he will mete out¹⁰ punishment on those who do not know God¹¹* and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **1:9** They¹² will undergo the penalty of eternal destruction, *away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,¹³* **1:10** when he comes to be glorified among his saints and admired¹⁴ on that day among all who have believed—and you did in fact believe our testimony.¹⁵ **1:11** And in this regard we pray for you always, that our God will make you worthy of his calling¹⁶ and fulfill by his power your every desire for goodness and work of faith, **1:12** that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to¹⁷ the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Day of the Lord

2:1 Now regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered so as to be with him,¹⁸ we ask you, brothers and sisters,¹⁹ **2:2** that you not be easily²⁰ shaken from your composure or be disturbed by any kind of spirit or message or letter allegedly from us,²¹ to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. **2:3** Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes²² and the man of lawlessness²³ is revealed, the son of destruction.²⁴ **2:4** He²⁵ opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and as a result he takes his seat²⁶ in God's temple, displaying himself as God.²⁷ **2:5** Surely you recall²⁸ that I used to tell you these things while I was still with you. **2:6** And so²⁹ you know what holds him back,³⁰ so

¹tn Grk "Paul." The word "from" is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied to indicate the sender of the letter.

²tn Grk "Grace to you and peace."

³tc Most witnesses add ἡμῶν (*hēmōn*) to πατρός (*patros*), reading "God our Father," in apparent emulation of Paul's almost universal style. There seems to be no good reason why a scribe would omit it here and only here. Thus, the reading of B D P 33 1739 1881 *et pauci* seems to be the original wording of this salutation. As well, the intrinsic evidence also supports the shorter reading: since 2 Thessalonians was one of Paul's earliest letters, his stereotyped salutation was still in embryonic form. See discussion at 1 Thess 1:1.

⁴tn Grk "brothers," but the Greek word may be used for "brothers and sisters" or "fellow Christians" as here (cf. BAGD 16 s.v. ἀδελφός 1, where considerable nonbiblical evidence for the plural ἀδελφοί [*adelphoi*] meaning "brothers and sisters" is cited).

⁵tn Grk "as is worthy."

⁶tn Grk "so that you may be made worthy." The passive infinitive καταξιωθῆναι (*kataxiōthēnai*) has been translated as an active construction in English for stylistic reasons.

⁷tn Grk "if in fact/since," as a continuation of the preceding.

⁸tn Grk "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus."

⁹tn Grk "angels of power," translated as an attributive genitive.

¹⁰tn Grk "meting out," as a description of Jesus Christ in v. 7. Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started at the beginning of v. 8 in the translation.

¹¹sn An allusion to Jer 10:25, possibly also to Ps 79:6 and Isa 66:15.

¹²tn Grk "who," describing the people mentioned in v. 8. A new sentence was started here in the translation by replacing the relative pronoun with a personal pronoun.

¹³sn An allusion to Isa 2:10, 19, 21.

¹⁴tn Or "marveled at."

¹⁵tn Grk "because our testimony to you was believed."

¹⁶tn Or "your calling."

¹⁷tn Or "by means of."

¹⁸tn Grk "our gathering with him."

¹⁹tn Grk "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:3.

²⁰tn Or "quickly, soon."

²¹tn Grk "as through us."

²²tn Grk "for unless the rebellion comes first." The clause about "the day" is understood from v. 2.

²³tc Many MSS (A D F G Ψ Byz lat) read "of sin" here, but other important MSS (B B 1739 *et pauci*) read "of lawlessness." External support for "of sin" is broader, but that word occurs much more frequently in Paul's writings than "lawlessness." On internal grounds the later mention of "lawlessness" in v. 7 and the description "the lawless one" in v. 8 seem to presuppose ἀνομίας (*anomias*) here.

²⁴tn Or "the one destined for destruction."

²⁵tn Grk "the one who opposes," describing the figure in v. 3. A new sentence was started here in the translation by supplying the personal pronoun ("he") and translating the participle ἀντικείμενος (*antikeimenos*) as a finite verb.

²⁶sn Allusions to Isa 14:13-14; Dan 11:36; Ezek 28:2-9 respectively.

²⁷tn Grk "that he is God."

²⁸tn Grk "You do remember, don't you?"

²⁹tn Grk "and now," but this shows the logical result of his previous teaching.

that he will be revealed in his own time. **2:7** For the hidden power of lawlessness³¹ is already at work. However, the one who holds him back³² will do so until he is taken out of the way, **2:8** and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord³³ will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his coming. **2:9** The coming of the lawless one³⁴ will be by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles³⁵ and signs and false wonders, **2:10** and with every kind of evil deception directed against³⁶ those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth³⁷ so as to be saved. **2:11** Consequently³⁸ God sends on them a deluding influence³⁹ that they may believe what is false. **2:12** And so they will all⁴⁰ be judged⁴¹ who have not believed the truth but have delighted in evil.

Call to Stand Firm

2:13 But we ought to give thanks for you always, brothers and sisters⁴² loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning⁴³ for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. **2:14** He called you to this salvation⁴⁴ through our gospel, so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ **2:15** Therefore, brothers and sisters,⁴⁶ stand firm and hold on to the traditions that we taught you, whether by speech or by letter.⁴⁷ **2:16** Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, **2:17** encourage your hearts and strengthen you⁴⁸ in every good thing you do or say.⁴⁹

Request for Prayer

3:1 Finally, pray for us, brothers and sisters,⁵⁰ that the Lord's message⁵¹ may spread quickly and be honored⁵² as in fact it was among you, **3:2** and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil people. For not all have faith. **3:3** But the Lord is faithful, and he⁵³ will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. **3:4** And we are confident about you in the Lord that you are both doing—and will do—what we are commanding. **3:5** Now may the Lord direct your hearts toward the love of God and the endurance of Christ.

Response to the Undisciplined

3:6 But we command you, brothers and sisters,⁵⁴ in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined⁵⁵ life⁵⁶ and not according to the tradition you received from us. **3:7** For you know yourselves how you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline⁵⁷ among you, **3:8** and we did not eat anyone's food⁵⁸ without paying.⁵⁹ Instead, in toil and drudgery we worked⁶⁰ night and day in order not to burden any of you. **3:9** It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate.⁶¹ **3:10** For even when we were with you, we used to give you this command: "If

³⁰ **tn** *Grk* "the thing that restrains."

³¹ **tn** *Grk* "the mystery of lawlessness." In Paul "mystery" often means "revealed truth, something formerly hidden but now made widely known," but that does not make sense with the verb of this clause ("to be at work, to be active").

³² **tn** *Grk* "the one who restrains." This gives a puzzling contrast to the impersonal phrase in v. 6 ("the thing that restrains"). The restraint can be spoken of as a force or as a person. Some have taken this to mean the Roman Empire in particular or human government in general, since these are forces that can also be seen embodied in a person, the emperor or governing head. But apocalyptic texts like Revelation and Daniel portray human government of the end times as under Satanic control, not holding back his influence. Also the power to hold back Satanic forces can only come from God. So others understand this restraint to be some force from God: the preaching of the gospel or the working of the Holy Spirit through God's people.

³³ **tc** Several important witnesses of the Alexandrian and Western traditions add Ἰησοῦς (*Iēsous*, "Jesus") to κύριος (*kurios*, "Lord"; so **ℵ A D* F G 0278 33** latt syr cop). But there is sufficient evidence in the Alexandrian tradition for the shorter reading (**B 1739 1881**), supported by the Byzantine text as well as Irenaeus. Although it is possible that scribes overlooked Ἰησοῦς if the two *nomina sacra* occurred together (ΚΚΙϚ), since "the Lord Jesus" is a frequent enough appellation that is normally without variants, the shorter reading is to be preferred.

³⁴ **tn** *Grk* "whose coming," referring to the lawless one. Because of the length and complexity of the Greek construction, a new sentence was started here in the translation.

³⁵ **tn** *Grk* "every miracle."

³⁶ **tn** *Grk* "deception for/toward."

³⁷ **tn** *Grk* "they did not accept the love of the truth."

³⁸ **tn** *Grk* "and for this reason."

³⁹ **tn** *Grk* "a working of error."

⁴⁰ **tc** Several MSS (**B D Ψ 0278 Byz**) read πάντες (*pantes*) here, in emulation of the more common word in Paul (468 times to 2 times). ἀπαντες (*apantes*) is found in excellent witnesses, however, of both the Alexandrian and Western texts (**ℵ A F G 33 81 1739 1881 et pauci**). πάντες thus gives itself away as a motivated reading. Translation is not affected either way.

⁴¹ **tn** *Grk* "that they all might be judged," continuing the previous sentence.

⁴² **tn** *Grk* "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:3.

⁴³ **tc** Some MSS (**B F G 33 1739 al**) read "as a first-fruit" (i.e., as the first converts), but this is more likely to be a change by scribes who thought of the early churches in this way. Paul would not be likely to call the Thessalonians "the first-fruits" among his converts. The reading in the text is supported by **ℵ D Ψ Byz**.

⁴⁴ **tn** *Grk* "to which," referring to the main idea of v. 13.

⁴⁵ **sn** *That you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* For Paul the ultimate stage of salvation is glorification (Rom 8:30).

⁴⁶ **tn** *Grk* "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:3.

⁴⁷ **tn** *Grk* "that you were taught whether by word or by letter of ours."

⁴⁸ **tn** *Grk* simply "strengthen," with the object understood from the preceding.

⁴⁹ **tn** *Grk* "every good work and word."

⁵⁰ **tn** *Grk* "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:3.

⁵¹ **tn** Or "the word of the Lord."

sn "The word of the Lord" is a technical expression in OT literature, often referring to a divine prophetic utterance (e.g., Gen 15:1, Isa 1:10, Jonah 1:1). In the NT it occurs 15 times: 3 times as ῥῆμα τοῦ κυρίου (*rhēma tou kurīou*; Luke 22:61, Acts 11:16, 1 Pet 1:25) and 12 times as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (*logos tou kurīou*; here and in Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48, 49; 15:35, 36; 16:32; 19:10, 20; 1 Thes 1:8, 4:15). As in the OT, this phrase focuses on the prophetic nature and divine origin of what has been said. Here the phrase has been translated "the Lord's message" because of the focus upon the spread of the gospel evident in the passage.

⁵² **tn** *Grk* "may run and be glorified."

⁵³ **tn** *Grk* "who."

⁵⁴ **tn** *Grk* "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:3.

⁵⁵ **tn** Or "unruly, out of line." The particular violation Paul has in mind is idleness (as described in vv. 8-11), so this could be translated to reflect that.

⁵⁶ **tn** *Grk* "walking in an undisciplined way" ("walking" is a common NT idiom for one's way of life or conduct).

⁵⁷ **tn** This is the verbal form of the words occurring in vv. 6 and 11, meaning "to act out of line, in an unruly way."

⁵⁸ **tn** *Grk* "bread."

⁵⁹ **tn** *Grk* "we did not eat bread freely from anyone."

⁶⁰ **tn** *Grk* "but working," as a continuation of the previous sentence. Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started with the word "Instead" in the translation.

⁶¹ **tn** *Grk* "an example for you to imitate us."

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anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat.” **3:11** For we hear that some among you are living an undisciplined life,⁶² not doing their own work but meddling in the work of others.⁶³ **3:12** Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and so provide their own food to eat.⁶⁴ **3:13** But you, brothers and sisters,⁶⁵ do not grow weary in doing what is right. **3:14** But if anyone does not obey our message through this letter, take note of him and do not associate closely with him, so that he may be ashamed. **3:15** Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.⁶⁶

Closing

3:16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all. **3:17** I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which is how I write in every letter.⁶⁷ **3:18** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

⁶²tn *Grk* “walking in an undisciplined way” (“walking” is a common NT idiom for one’s way of life or conduct).

⁶³tn There is a play on words in the Greek: “working at nothing, but working around,” “not keeping busy but being busybodies.”

⁶⁴tn *Grk* “that by working quietly they may eat their own bread.”

⁶⁵tn *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:3.

⁶⁶tn That is, as a fellow believer.

⁶⁷tn *Grk* “The greeting in my hand, Paul, which is a sign in every letter, thus I write.”

sn Up to 3:17 the letter was dictated by Paul but written down by a secretary or amanuensis. But Paul took up the pen and wrote vv. 17-18 personally to authenticate that it was his (*how I write in every letter*). See similar indications in 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; and Col 4:18.