

## 2 THESSALONIANS ARGUMENT

### Introductory Matters

#### Authorship

Paul identifies himself as the author two times in the book (1:1; 3:17). Although Paul uses the expression “we” in connection with the first reference (1:1, 3), the second reference (3:17) leaves little doubt that Paul is the sole author of this epistle. The view that Paul was the author enjoys strong external support.<sup>1</sup> Not only did the church fathers not contradict Pauline authorship but many of them also mentioned Paul as the author. In fact, that external support for the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians may be stronger than the external support favoring the Pauline authorship of 1 Thessalonians. Pauline authorship was so readily accepted that rationalistic critics did not challenge it until the 19th century.

Despite this evidence favoring Pauline authorship, the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians remains one of the most doubted books in the Pauline corpus next to Ephesians and the pastoral letters.<sup>2</sup> However, most of the argument used to deny Pauline authorship can be readily answered. For example, some say that imminence exists in the first letter while it is lacking in the second letter. According to this argument, although “we” is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, it is absent in the second letter. Yet such imminence is noticeable in the second letter (2:1). It is also argued that the linguistic features of 2 Thessalonians differ markedly from Paul’s ordinary style. However, such a deviation could have to do with the differing tone of the letter or the employment of a different amanuensis. Others contend that the tone of 2 Thessalonians is more formal and distant than that of

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<sup>1</sup> See Daniel Wallace, “2 Thessalonians: Introduction, Outline, and Argument,” online: [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), accessed 12 July 2005, 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Wallace’s helpful ranking system demonstrating how scholars view the authenticity of the various books of the Pauline corpus. Wallace, “2 Thessalonians: Introduction, Outline, and Argument,” 5, n. 1.

1 Thessalonians. Yet such a change in tone could pertain to the change in circumstances that gave rise to the second letter. Moreover, some have suggested that the letter reveals more Old Testament data than what Gentiles would have been aware of. However, Gentiles that frequented the synagogue would have a firm understanding of the Old Testament (Acts 17:1-10). Finally, some have questioned the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians on the grounds that it is unlikely that Paul would have addressed the same audience twice within such a short period of time on the same subject matter. However, such similarity of subject matter actually lends more credence to authenticity rather than inauthenticity. Also, it is not out of character for Paul to do so given the similar content and short period of time in between the “severe letter” and 2 Corinthians.<sup>3</sup>

### **Place of Writing and Date**

The place of writing was Corinth. 2 Thessalonians 1:1 records Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy as being together. The New Testament indicates that these three were together only in Corinth (Acts 18:5). Moreover, the concerns of the second letter arose out of problems that were discussed in the first letter (1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-15). Thus, the second letter was probably written as an urgent response to many of the issues surfaced in the first letter. Therefore, the second letter was probably written within 6 to 12 months of the first letter. In sum, it seems likely that 2 Thessalonians was written from Corinth sometime in between late A.D. 51 and early A.D. 52.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wallace, “2 Thessalonians: Introduction, Outline, and Argument,” 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Some have postulated that 1 Thessalonians followed 2 Thessalonians. However, most of the arguments raised in favor of this position have been answered. For example, it is argued that in 2 Thessalonians trials are at their zenith while they are a thing of the past in 1 Thessalonians. However, trials were not a thing of the past according to 1 Thessalonians 3:4. Moreover, it is contended that internal difficulties are a new development in 2 Thessalonians (2 Thess 3:6-15) while in 1 Thessalonians they are already known (1 Thess 4:11-12; 5:14). However, the difficulties mentioned are common with the general Christian experience. Furthermore, it is maintained that the authenticating mark at the end of 2 Thessalonians would only be meaningful in the first letter. However, Paul used the identifying mark at the end of 2 Thessalonians in response to the forgery (2 Thess 2:1-2). In addition, some say that the three *pericopes* (1 Thess 4:9-12, 13-18; 5:1-11) only make sense if Paul was answering issues raised in a previous communication. However, it is more probable that Paul had these problems orally relayed to him from Timothy. Also, it is argued that there is nothing in 1 Thessalonians that would justify the response given in 2 Thessalonians. However,

### **Purpose and Occasion for Writing**

Since Paul had written to the Thessalonians, more problems had developed within the church. Paul became aware of these problems either from the messenger who delivered 1 Thessalonians, from someone Paul sent to check on the status of the church, or from someone who informed Paul of what was going on in Thessalonica. There was some good news. The Thessalonians had continued to grow and remain faithful in spite of persecution. There was also some bad news. A false understanding of the Day of the Lord had arisen. Because people believed that the Day of the Lord had already begun they were quitting their jobs in light of the soon return of Christ. Paul's credibility had no doubt come under fire because the inauguration of the Day of the Lord contradicted his previous teaching that the believers would be kept out of this terrible time period (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). This false teaching had spread because of a forged letter alleged to have come from Paul indicating that the Day of the Lord had begun (2 Thess 2:1-2). It is likely that the very unbelieving Jews that had Paul removed from the city disseminated this forged letter in an attempt to undermine Paul's credibility. These urgent circumstances prompted Paul to write. In chapter 1, Paul commends the Thessalonians for enduring persecution. In chapter two, he corrects the Thessalonians' false understanding concerning the inauguration of the Day of the Lord. In chapter three, he deals with the practical consequences of their wrong view of eschatology.

### **Message**

The message of 2 Thessalonians is that correct living emanates from a correct view of the future. In chapter one, Paul encourages the Thessalonians in the midst of persecution by informing

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Paul's response in 2 Thessalonians could be due to things that were relayed to him orally. On the other hand, there are sound reasons for accepting the traditional order of the letters. First, the traditional order is the traditional opinion of the church. Second, the problems mentioned in 1 Thessalonians have deepened in 2 Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-15). Third, 2 Thessalonians makes reference to a previous letter (2 Thess 2:15; 3:17). Fourth, the warm remarks of 1 Thessalonians 2:17 and 3:6 probably would not have followed 2 Thessalonians. See Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 587-88.

them that God will execute future judgment upon their enemies. Thus, encouragement in the present comes from a proper eschatological understanding. In chapter two, Paul corrects the false eschatology that the Day of the Lord has begun. In chapter three, he deals with the mentality that seeks to use the soon return of Christ as an excuse for escaping life's responsibilities. In sum, while a correct eschatological understanding leads to encouragement and a proper balance between waiting for the Lord and work, a wrong eschatology negates these things.

### **Outline**

- I. Commendation for enduring persecution (1:1-12)
  - A. Salutation to the Thessalonians (1:1-2)
    - 1. Senders (1:1 a)
    - 2. Recipients (1:1 b)
    - 3. Greeting (1:2)
  - B. Encouragement in the midst of persecution (1:3-12)
    - 1. Thanksgiving for the persecuted (1:3-4)
    - 2. Reason for the persecution (1:5)
    - 3. Destiny of the persecutors (1:6-10)
    - 4. Prayer for continued progress (1:11-12)
- II. Doctrinal correction (2:1-17)
  - A. Problem stated (2:1-2)
  - B. Prerequisites of the Day of the Lord (2:3-10)
    - 1. Apostasy (2:3 a)
    - 2. Revealing of the man of lawlessness (2:3 b-12)
      - a) Description of the man of lawlessness (2:3 b-4)
      - b) Removal of the restrainer (2:5-7)
      - c) Destruction of the lawless one (2:8-9)
      - d) The destruction of the lawless one's followers (2:10-12)
  - C. The contrasting destiny of the righteous (2:13-17)
    - 1. Thanksgiving for their calling (2:13-14)
    - 2. Exhortation to stand firm (2:15)

3. Prayer for strength (2:16-17)
- III. Consequences of poor doctrine (3:1-18)
  - A. Reciprocal prayer (3:1-5)
    1. Prayer for the missionaries (3:1-2)
      - a) Spread of the message (3:1)
      - b) Paul's deliverance (3:2)
    2. Prayer for the Thessalonians (3:3-5)
      - a) Protection from Satan (3:3)
      - b) Continued obedience (3:4)
      - c) Greater intimacy with God (3:5)
  - B. Exhortation to discipline the idle (3:6-15)
    1. The exhortation (3:6)
    2. A better example (3:7-9)
    3. The reasons for the exhortation (3:10-11)
    4. The exhortation for the lazy to work (3:12)
    5. The need for patience (3:13)
    6. The procedure of discipline (3:14-15)
      - a) Negative aspect: disassociation and shame (3:14)
      - b) Positive aspect: treat disciplinee as a brother (3:15)
  - C. Conclusion (3:16-18)
    1. Benediction of peace (3:16)
    2. Claim of authorship (3:17)
    3. Benediction of grace (3:18)

### **Argument**

In the first chapter, Paul commends the Thessalonians for their perseverance under trials. In his salutation, he emphasizes God's grace because he knows that it is the source that has allowed the Thessalonians to persevere (1:1-2). Through the experience of persecution, their faith and love for one another have grown exponentially.<sup>5</sup> The desires that Paul expressed for his readers in 1 Thessalonians (3:12; 4:10) have now become a reality. Their perseverance in the midst of

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<sup>5</sup> Their development in these areas has been exceptional rather than normal.

persecution has led Paul to speak favorably of them to the other churches (1:3-4). Paul also explains the reason for their trials. God was using their adverse circumstances to prepare them for kingdom responsibilities. Thus, their suffering actually demonstrated their citizenship in God's kingdom (1:5).

In an attempt to further encourage his persecuted audience, Paul explains that those who are causing them trouble will have trouble inflicted upon them at Christ's Second Advent (1:6-10).<sup>6</sup> When this event transpires, the persecuted believers will ultimately receive alleviation from their tormentors (1:7). These persecutors will be eternally<sup>7</sup> judged (1:9) because they do not know God and disobey the gospel (1:8).<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the fate of the wicked, the saints will experience eternal glory (1:10). Paul concludes this chapter by praying<sup>9</sup> that the Thessalonians will lead lives in keeping with their destiny and that God would bring to full expression every good purpose that He has for them. God's purpose in all of this is that He might glorify Himself (1:11-12).

In chapter two, Paul corrects the doctrinal problem that was causing so much turmoil within the Thessalonian assembly. First, Paul explains the problem (2:1-2). The Thessalonians had received a forgery claiming to have come from Paul indicating that the Day of the Lord<sup>10</sup> had already begun.

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<sup>6</sup> That the Second Advent rather than the rapture is in view seems evident from the fact that the rapture is not a judgment while what is depicted here is a judgment. Such an understanding contradicts the posttribulation position, which attempts to combine the rapture and the Second Advent.

<sup>7</sup> The eternality of this future judgment is seen from three facts. First, the word eternal is used in verse 9. Second, "away from the presence of the Lord" brings to mind Matthew 25:41, which also speaks of eternal judgment (Matt 25:41, 46). Third, the notion "away from the presence of the Lord" is a timeless reality.

<sup>8</sup> Some take these as two groups of people, namely Jew and Gentile. This argument is built upon the notion that Gentiles are typically described as those who do not know God (Eph 2:2) and Jews are typically described as disobedient (Rom 10:16). However, this equation does not always work. Jews are sometimes described as those who do not know God (John 8:54-55). Gentiles are sometimes described as disobedient (Rom 11:30). It seems more likely that Paul is employing a common Hebrew literary device called synonymous parallelism to depict one group of people rather than two separate groups.

<sup>9</sup> These verses represent the first of five prayers that Paul offers on behalf of the Thessalonians found throughout the letter. These prayers are found in 1:11-12; 2:16-17; 3:5, 16, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Because a day encompasses both day and night (Gen 1:5), the Day of the Lord encompasses both the spiritual darkness and blessings of the eschaton. Thus, the Day of the Lord would encompass the Tribulation, millennium, and great white throne judgment. Some include the rapture as part of the Day of the Lord on the grounds

In addition to the forgery,<sup>11</sup> their current persecutions as well as their prior knowledge that the Day of the Lord would take the world by surprise also played a role in causing them to embrace this false teaching. Acceptance of this false doctrine directly undermined Paul's credibility since he had already told them that they would escape this terrible time period (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9).<sup>12</sup> It is likely that the very unbelieving Jews that removed Paul from the city had circulated this letter among the Thessalonians for the purpose of weaning them away from loyalty to Paul so that they could rebuild their allegiance to the synagogue.

In verses 3-12, Paul enumerates three events that must first transpire before one can confidently say that the Day of the Lord has begun. Paul's point is that because these three events had not yet come to the world then neither had the Day of the Lord. These events include the apostasy, the advent of the man of lawlessness, and the removal of the restrainer. Paul presents these events in more of a logical rather than a chronological order. The first event that Paul enumerates is the apostasy (2:3a), which means departure. This event most likely refers to the rapture.<sup>13</sup> The

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that it also represents God's direct intervention in history and Parousia is a broad enough concept to encompass the rapture. However, it is unlikely that the rapture should be included. The rapture concerns the church and not Israel. While the Parousia is a broad enough concept to include the rapture, the Day of the Lord as defined here is narrow as it primarily concerns Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

<sup>11</sup> Paul enumerates the possible sources of this false teaching as coming from a spirit, message, or letter.

<sup>12</sup> The use of *uper* in 2:1 makes it clear that Paul is concerned about the impact that this false teaching will have on his previous teachings concerning the rapture. The uses of *uper* marks a change in subject from the Second Advent (1:6-10) to the rapture (2:1).

<sup>13</sup> Most interpret "apostasy" in terms of a departure from doctrinal truth in the Tribulation. The only other time that this same noun is used in the New Testament is in Acts 21:21 where it also refers to doctrinal departure. However, how would such a doctrinal departure specify that the Day of the Lord had begun when such a departure was already taking place in Paul's day (1 Tim 4; 2 Tim 4; 2 Pet 2:2)? "Apostasy" may have more to do with the Greek language in general. The noun apostasy comes from the Greek verb *afisthmi*, which means to depart from. In extra biblical literature, it is used of someone leaving because they have been drafted into the army, a boat leaving a dock, and a bride leaving to join her husband. J. Dwight Pentecost, class notes of Andy Woods in BE2045A Seminar in Pauline Literature, Dallas Theological Seminary, Fall 2003. See also H. Wayne House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: Apostasy of Rapture?," in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995). Thus, "apostasy" may have more to do with the physical departure of the rapture rather than a mere doctrinal departure. The immediate context certainly supports the notion that the rapture may be in view. The rapture is mentioned in verse 1 and was also prominent in Paul's first epistle (1 Thess 4:13-17). The notion of the apostasy being the rapture would only enhance Paul's argument. In essence, Paul would be saying, "the Day of the Lord could not be currently underway because the obvious sign of the rapture has not yet occurred." It should also be noted that viewing

second event that Paul mentions is the unveiling of the lawless one (2:3b-4). The lawless one's activities are a reiteration of information found in Daniel 9:27, which discusses the Antichrist's desecration of the rebuilt Jewish temple midway through the tribulation period.<sup>14</sup>

The third event that Paul mentions is the removal of the restrainer (2:5-7).<sup>15</sup> This event refers to the removal of the Holy Spirit's restraining ministry thus allowing the lawless one to come to power.<sup>16</sup> After the removal of the restrainer and the advent of the lawless one, Satan will enjoy unhindered expression through this man thus allowing him to deceive the Christ rejecting world (2:9).<sup>17</sup> Yet, despite such unrestrained satanic activity, the lawless one will be overthrown with the

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the "apostasy" as the rapture is opposed by many on the grounds that nowhere else does Scripture use "apostasy" to depict the rapture, "apostasy" would not be suddenly employed here to refer to the rapture when "our gathering together to Him" is used to depict the rapture just a few verses earlier (2:1), the noun "apostasy" is only used elsewhere in Acts 21:21 in reference to doctrinal departure, "apostasy" is never used to convey spatial language, and "apostasy" denotes an active part on those who depart while at the rapture those who depart will be passive as the Lord will remove them.

<sup>14</sup> Antiochus Epiphanies' desecration of the temple during the intertestamental period serves as a prototype of the future antichrist's desecration of the temple (Dan 11:31).

<sup>15</sup> The mystery of lawlessness represents one of several New Testament mysteries (Matt 13:11; Rom 16:26; 1 Cor 2:6-12; Eph 1:9; 3:3-5; Col 1:25-27). A mystery refers to a truth now disclosed that has not been disclosed in past ages.

<sup>16</sup> Some interpret the restrainer as Rome. However, Rome is gone and such restraint remains today. Others believe that Satan is the restrainer. Yet Satan's restraint of his own man (2:9) would mean that Satan's kingdom is divided against itself (Matt 12:24-26). Still others understand the restrainer as government. However, many corrupt governments do not restrain sin. Furthermore, the institution of human government will reach its zenith under the future Antichrist. Another interpretation understands the restrainer as Michael the Archangel. However, this interpretation fails to pay attention to Jude 9, which indicates Michael's reluctance to oppose Satan. It seems best to interpret the restrainer as the Holy Spirit for the following reasons. First, because "spirit" is a neuter noun and because Christ repeatedly describes the Holy Spirit through the use of the personal pronoun "he" in the upper room discourse (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14), the Holy Spirit as the referent best handles the switch from the neuter to the masculine participle in verses 6-7. Second, only the Holy Spirit would have the omnipotent power strong enough to restrain Satan's power. Third, Scripture indicates that the Holy Spirit is engaged in a similar type of restraining ministry today (John 16:7-11) and in Old Testament times (Gen 6:3). Perhaps Paul did not overtly use the expression "Holy Spirit" because he already taught the Thessalonians extensively on this subject (2:5). Thus, Paul is presupposing their prior knowledge. Thus, for him to expressly say "Holy Spirit" would be redundant and superfluous. While the Spirit's activities regarding conviction, regeneration, and sanctification will still be prevalent in the Tribulation, his unique ministry of holding back Satan's presentation of the lawless one will be taken out of the way. Paul indicated that such restraint was already under way in his own day. If the Holy Spirit restrains the lawless one through those the Spirit indwells (Rom 8:9), the church must be taken out of the way before the lawless one can be revealed. Such a perspective furnishes a powerful argument in favor of pretribulationism. Such a perspective might also indicate that the Holy Spirit will not permanently indwell tribulation saints as He permanently indwells church age believers today. In other words, the Tribulation may represent a "roll back" to a previous dispensation when the Spirit indwelt believers selectively and temporarily.

<sup>17</sup> The same Greek nouns that are used to depict the miracles wrought by Satan through the lawless one are the same words that are used to speak of miracles wrought by Christ (Acts 2:22) and the apostles (Heb 2:4). These



mere breath of Christ's mouth (2:8). All those who follow the man of lawlessness will be similarly deceived and destroyed. God will confirm<sup>18</sup> those who have rejected Christ in their own decision by sending them a powerful delusion (2:10-12).<sup>19</sup> Paul's point in rehearsing all of these eschatological events is to convey that because these events have not yet transpired, the Day of the Lord obviously has not yet begun. Thus, the Thessalonians need not be unduly unsettled by the contents of the forged letter.

In contrast to the destiny of the wicked in the Tribulation, Paul closes this chapter by referring to the destiny of the Thessalonians (2:13-17). First, Paul expresses thanksgiving for their calling. Because of their election they have believed, are presently being sanctified, and will share in Christ's splendor at His future unveiling (2:13-14).<sup>20</sup> Second, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to stand firm and remain consistent with what Paul had originally delivered to them orally and in writing (2:15). In other words, the Thessalonians are not to be swayed by new ideas that contradict Pauline teaching, such as the notion that the Day of the Lord has already begun. The Thessalonians should have recognized such teaching as false since it contradicted Paul's previous teaching (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). Third, Paul prays that God will strengthen the Thessalonians so that they can

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similarities demonstrate the unrestrained influence that Satan will have through the man of lawlessness in the Tribulation.

<sup>18</sup> God followed a similar pattern with Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus. After Pharaoh repeatedly rejected God's message through Moses, God confirmed him in his decision by hardening his heart.

<sup>19</sup> Some teach from these verses that those who reject Christ before the rapture will have no opportunity of receiving Him in the Tribulation. However, this view forces the text to answer a question that it is not dealing with. These verses are not dealing with the question of who can be saved during the tribulation period. Rather, they are dealing with how the lawless one will gain control of the world during that time and why God will allow the earth's population to be deluded. These verses are speaking of unbelievers in the Tribulation. The context pertains to Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week and not issues related to the church age.

<sup>20</sup> The reference to sanctification from the beginning indicates the first of four types of sanctification that believers experience. The first is preliminary sanctification where God sets believers apart for salvation in eternity past long before they are born (Gal 1:15; 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Thess 2:13). The second is positional sanctification where the believer receives right standing before God at the moment of faith (1 Cor 1:30; 6:11). The third is progressive sanctification where the believer's daily life is slowly conformed into the character of Christ (1 Thess 4:3-4). The fourth type is prospective sanctification where the believer is liberated from the very presence of sin at glorification (1 Thess 5:23). Stanley Toussaint, class notes of Andy Woods in BE 307B Hebrews, General Epistles, and Revelation, Dallas Theological Seminary, Spring 2000.

remain steadfast. Such divinely implanted strength, hope, grace, and comfort would be necessary in their situation where persecution and false doctrine were so prevalent (2:16-17). This prayer transitions the reader away from the didactic section (2:1-17) to the horatory section of the letter (3:6-15).

Because a wrong eschatology has practical ramifications, the apostle turns his attention to correcting practical problems among the Thessalonian believers in the final section of the letter. The “finally” (3:1) transitions the reader into this final section. Before dealing with these pragmatic concerns, the apostle first mentions reciprocal prayer (3:1-5). He requests prayer from the Thessalonians. Specifically, he requests prayer for effectiveness in spreading the gospel and for deliverance from his enemies, who are the unbelieving Jews (3:1-2). Paul next mentions his prayer on behalf of the Thessalonians. He prays that God will protect them from Satan, for their continued obedience to apostolic instruction, and that they will experience greater intimacy with God. Paul defines such intimacy in terms of direction toward the love of God and steadfastness in Christ (3:3-5). Paul understands that if these prayer requests are granted, then the Thessalonians will be less likely to be swayed by the type of false teaching that he dealt with in the previous chapter.

Next, Paul deals with the practical problem introduced by the false view of eschatology that the Thessalonians had embraced (3:6-15). The Thessalonians had reasoned that if the Day of the Lord was already underway and Christ’s return was near, then why work? This mindset is hinted at in the first letter (1 Thess 5:14) and had apparently gotten worse by the time Paul penned the second letter. Paul commanded the church to discipline those with this lethargic philosophy by socially ostracizing them (Matt 18:15-17). Paul explained that such a command was based upon the authority of Christ (3:6). Next, Paul pointed to the behavior of himself and his fellow missionaries when they were in Thessalonica earlier on the second missionary journey. He pointed to this

behavior as the proper example to follow. During that time these ministers had a right to receive support for their ministry (1 Cor 9; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:18). Yet they did not exercise this right. Rather, they supported themselves so as not to be a financial burden upon those to whom they were ministering (1 Thess 2:9). The lazy Thessalonian brethren should follow this example (3:7-9). Paul then turns around the Thessalonians' argument by taking it to its logical conclusion. If Christ's soon return makes it unnecessary to work, then it is also unnecessary to eat (3:10).<sup>21</sup> Through these admonitions Paul seeks to communicate the right balance between waiting and working. His point is that imminency should lead to holiness rather than idleness. Although Jesus *could* come back at any moment, there is no guarantee that he *would* come back. Thus, the Thessalonians were to carry on with their daily responsibilities just in case the Lord should tarry (3:11). Next, Paul directly exhorts the lazy brethren to resume their financial responsibilities (3:12; 1 Thess 4:11). He also exhorts the church leadership to exhibit patience as they embark upon the process of church discipline (3:13). Paul then explains the goal of church discipline (3:14-15). By employing social ostracism, its goal is to embarrass the sinner into repentance (3:14). Thus, its goal is ultimately restorative rather than punitive. Its restorative aim is seen in Paul's final admonition not to treat the erring brother as an enemy (3:15).

Paul concludes the letter by issuing two more prayers on behalf of the Thessalonians. First, Paul prays that God's presence would manifest itself in their midst through the bestowal of divine peace (3:16). Such a deposit of peace will allow them to continue to endure in spite of their adverse circumstances. Second, Paul prays that God's presence would be manifest among them through the bestowal of grace (3:18). Sandwiched in between these two prayer requests is Paul's authenticating mark on the letter (3:17). Although an amanuensis probably wrote this rest of the letter (Rom 16:22;

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<sup>21</sup> Wallace, "2 Thessalonians: Introduction, Outline, and Argument," 5.

1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 1 Pet 5:12), Paul wrote this small portion himself (Gal 6:11). Because Paul's handwriting was distinguishable from that of his amanuensis and was easily recognizable by his audience, such personal penmanship had the effect of authenticating the letter. This authentication was necessary to distinguish this letter from previous forgeries (2:1-2).

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