

PRECEPT
UPON
PRECEPT

2 Thessalonians

SO YOU WON'T BE DECEIVED
ABOUT HIS COMING

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT®
2 THESSALONIANS
SO YOU WON'T BE DECEIVED ABOUT HIS COMING

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HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY; ARTHUR, DAVID; DE LACY, PETE

How to Study Your Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994/2010

The New Inductive Study Bible—New American Standard Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2000

Commentaries on 2 Thessalonians

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

MARTIN, D. MICHAEL

The New American Commentary: Volume 33, 1, 2 Thessalonians

Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 1995

MORRIS, LEON

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Volume 13, 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.

THOMAS, ROBERT L.; EARLE, RALPH; HIEBERT, D. EDMOND

Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1, 2 Thessalonians; 1, 2 Timothy; Titus

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996

WALVOORD, JOHN F.; ZUCK, ROY B., EDS.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures—New Testament

Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983-c1985

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Logos Bible Software

Powerful search engines and up to 4,000 electronic Bible study resources (commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries etc.) make it fast and easy to do simple and complex searches of multiple sources, then pull materials together for orderly presentation—excellent for word and topical studies based on English or original Hebrew and Greek. Available at www.logos.com.

LESSON ONE

Overview

THIS LESSON
INCORPORATES

The following located in the Appendix:
Observation Worksheets of 2 Thessalonians
“2 Thessalonians at a Glance”
Cross-references

Time is short. How wise you are, Beloved, to choose to study God’s Word now.

DAY ONE

Every book of the Bible is a revelation from God given at a specific time to a particular person for a divine purpose. The Bible is a compilation of sixty-six books, each inspired by the Spirit of God and without error, written over a period of 1600 years by approximately forty authors. Some are history, some are poetry, some are prophecy, and some are letters. Our approach to each is unique to the book.

1. The purpose of this first lesson of 2 Thessalonians is to discover the context of the book. This will lay the foundation for the other lessons.

If you have never studied a Precept Upon Precept course before, read the chapters entitled “The Rule of Context—Context Rules!” and “Getting the Big Picture” in *How to Study Your Bible*.

The truths of the Bible can be understood only through revelation, taught by the Spirit. So as you begin each day’s study, ask God, by His Spirit, to open your eyes so that you might behold wonderful things from His Word.

2. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 17, then record what type of literature this is and who the author of this book is.

3. Since 2 Thessalonians is a letter, the place to begin your study is with the author. Therefore, the first thing you want to do is identify what the book tells you about the author. Then as you evaluate these facts, the context of 2 Thessalonians will begin to unfold.

Use the Observation Worksheets located in the Appendix for assignments. These Observation Worksheets are the text of 2 Thessalonians from the New American Standard Bible printed double-spaced and are just what they say: work-sheets. We encourage you to work on them, and at a later date you might want to transfer some of your study notes to your Bible.¹

Read 2 Thessalonians and mark with a specific color or colored symbol each mention of the author's name along with pronouns, such as "I," "my," "we," and "us," that refer specifically to him.

4. Using your marked Observation Worksheets, read all three chapters of 2 Thessalonians again. As you read, look carefully at each place you marked the author and list what the text says about him on the page "Author" at the end of the lesson. Do not include what he tells the recipients to do.
5. Can you see from the text when Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians? Before or after what? Read 2 Thessalonians 2:5, 15 for clues.
6. Can you tell from the text what happened that might have prompted Paul to write this letter? If so, note your answer below.
7. Why do you think Paul ended this letter the way he did in 2 Thessalonians 3:17? (You might check 1 Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18.)

¹ *The New Inductive Study Bible* is ideal for this. It is the best study Bible on the market because it doesn't tell you what the text means. Rather, it gives you instructions for studying each book of the Bible in addition to many other valuable study aids.

8. What have you learned about Paul today that you can model in your walk with the Lord?

DAY
TWO

Today we'll continue to look at 2 Thessalonians as a whole.

1. Read all three chapters of 2 Thessalonians and mark on your Observation Worksheets each mention of the recipients. Use a different color from what you used to mark the author. Be sure to mark pronouns for the recipients, such as *you* and *your* and synonyms like *brethren* and *beloved*.
2. Read 2 Thessalonians again. On the page "Recipients" at the end of this lesson, list what you learn about the recipients. Again, don't list what Paul tells them to do.
3. As you observed facts about the recipients, did you learn anything about the historical setting? For example, did you notice any problems they were experiencing? Note below anything you've observed so far.

DAY
THREE

1. As usual, you need to begin your day with prayer. Then we'll look at some key repeated words in 2 Thessalonians.
2. Read 2 Thessalonians again and mark the following each in a distinctive way:
 - a. *persecutions, afflictions, suffering**
 - b. references to the Lord's coming* (Do not mark "day of the Lord.")
 - c. *labor, work(ing)*

On the back cover of your workbook, you'll see marking suggestions for some words often used in the Bible. An asterisk [] shows these in this workbook.

DAY
FOUR

As you begin today, ask the Lord to guide you and continue to give you understanding of 2 Thessalonians.

1. Let's begin filling in the chart "2 Thessalonians at a Glance" in the Appendix. You might use a pencil in case you want to change something later.
 - a. Fill in the "Author."
 - b. Under "Key Words" write the key words and phrase that you marked.
 - c. Record under "Historical Setting" what you learned about the setting or circumstances surrounding this letter.
 - d. At this point, if you have an idea why Paul wrote this letter, record it under "Purpose."
 - e. Considering why Paul wrote and what he wrote about, summarize a theme for the book using a few words from the text. Record the theme beside "Book Theme" on the At a Glance chart.
2. Second Thessalonians is divided into three chapters. Though these chapter divisions are man-made, as are the verse divisions, they serve to help us identify where specific truths are located.
 - a. Read only chapter 1 looking for the theme (main subject) of that chapter. Using a few words from the chapter, summarize what it is about.

Write the theme in the column for chapter 1 on your "2 Thessalonians at a Glance" chart.
 - b. Following the same process, read chapter 2 and chapter 3, one at a time, and identify the theme (main subject) of each. Then write the theme in the appropriate space on your "2 Thessalonians at a Glance" chart.
3. You observed in this letter that Paul had been to Thessalonica. Take a few minutes and read Acts 17:1-13 to see what happened when Paul was there. If anything reminds you of what you observed in 2 Thessalonians, note it below.

4. Turn to the chart “Sequence of Events in Paul’s Life After His Conversion” at the end of this lesson.
 - a. Find where Acts 17 fits in the left column of the chart. When did Paul go to Thessalonica? What missionary journey was he on?
 - b. We know that this is not the first letter Paul wrote to those believers. According to the chart, when did Paul write both 1 and 2 Thessalonians? Record the date on your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart under “Date.”
5. Did anything you read in 2 Thessalonians speak to your heart in a special way this week? Record it below. Make sure you note why or how it spoke to you.

DAY
FIVE

1. To help you gain a better insight into the recipients of 2 Thessalonians, read 1 Thessalonians and see what you can learn about the Thessalonians, their relationship to Paul, their circumstances, and mutual topics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Record your insights below.

2. Now you can read the introductory remarks about 2 Thessalonians in commentaries.

Well, Beloved, you are on your way, and we rejoice over you. So determine in your heart that you are going to finish this study and do it as to the Lord.

AUTHOR

RECIPIENTS

2 Thessalonians

Lesson 1, Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN PAUL'S LIFE AFTER HIS CONVERSION*

* There are differing opinions on these dates. For consistency this chart will be the basis for dates pertaining to Paul's life.

Scripture	Year A.D.	Event
Acts 9:1-25	33-34	Conversion, time in Damascus
	35-47	Some silent years, except we know that Paul:
Galatians 1:17		1. Spent time in Arabia and Damascus
Acts 9:26; Galatians 1:18		2. Made first visit to Jerusalem
Acts 9:30-11:26; Galatians 1:21		3. Went to Tarsus, Syria-Cilicia area
Acts 11:26		4. Was with Barnabas in Antioch
Acts 11:27-30		5. With Barnabas took relief to brethren in Judea; Paul's second visit to Jerusalem
Acts 12:23	44	Herod Agrippa I dies
Acts 12:25-13:3		6. Returned to Antioch; was sent out with Barnabas by church at Antioch
Acts 13:4-14:26	47-48	First missionary journey: <i>Galatians</i> written (?) Proconsul Sergius Paulus at Paphos
Acts 15:1-35	49	Apostolic Council at Jerusalem—Paul visits Jerusalem <i>Galatians</i> written (?)
Acts 15:36-18:22	49-51	Second missionary journey: <i>1 and 2 Thessalonians</i> written— 1½ years in Corinth, Acts 18:11
	51-52	Gallio known to be proconsul in Corinth
Acts 18:23-21:17	52-56	Third missionary journey: <i>1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans</i> written— 1 Cor. from Ephesus, 2 Cor. from Macedonia, Romans from Corinth
Acts 21:17-23:35	56	Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested; held in Caesarea
Acts 24-26	57-59	Appearance before Felix and Drusilla; before Festus—appeals to Caesar; before Agrippa
Acts 27-28:15	59-60	Paul goes from Caesarea to Rome
Acts 28:16-31	60-62	First Roman imprisonment: <i>Ephesians, Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians</i> written—2 years in prison
	62	Paul's release; possible trip to Spain
	62	Paul in Macedonia: <i>1 Timothy</i> written
	62	Paul goes to Crete <i>Titus</i> written
	63-64	Paul taken to Rome and imprisoned: <i>2 Timothy</i> written
	64	Paul is absent from the body and present with the Lord (Others put Paul's conversion about A.D. 35, his death at A.D. 68.)

14 years, Galatians 2:1

3 years

2 THESSALONIANS 1

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

PAUL and Silvanus and Timothy,

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

- 2 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;
- 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.
- 5 *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.
- 6 For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
- 7 and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,
- 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
- 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.
- 11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,
- 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS 2

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- NOW** we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,
- 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.
 - 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,
 - 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.
 - 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?
 - 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.
 - 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.
 - 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;
 - 9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,
 - 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

- 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,
- 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.
- 13** But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
- 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.
- 16** Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,
- 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

2 THESSALONIANS 3

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- FINALLY, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as *it did* also with you;
- 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.
 - 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.
 - 4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will *continue to* do what we command.
 - 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.
 - 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.
 - 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,
 - 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;
 - 9 not because we do not have the right *to this*, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.
 - 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.
 - 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

- 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.
- 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.
- 14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.
- 15 *Yet* do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.
- 16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!
- 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.
- 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

2 THESSALONIANS AT A GLANCE

Book Theme:

Chapter Themes

Author:

1

Date:

2

Key Words:

3

Purpose:

**Historical
Setting:**

HOW TO DO A CHAPTER STUDY ~ Let's Get Started!

To learn more about doing a chapter study and other inductive Bible study skills, we encourage you to keep on hand a copy of ***How to Study Your Bible***. If you don't yet have a copy, you can order one by visiting www.precept.org or calling 800-763-8280.

A **chapter study** helps you to focus in on the details in the chapter to better understand what the author is saying. Each of the skills is used to bring important points to light.

- **Look for the 5 Ws and H**

Read the text asking the 5 Ws and H—*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How*. For example, when studying John 1, read the text asking questions like:

Who is this about?

When?

Where was the Word?

Who was the Word?

What did the Word do?

Don't expect every verse or chapter to answer all the 5 Ws and H about a particular subject or person, but you should read with a questioning mind-set.

Marking key words and phrases and making lists help you to answer the 5 Ws and H.

- **Mark key words and phrases**

Key words are repeated words within a text which are vital to its meaning.

Mark in a distinctive way each key word or phrase in the chapter along with its pronouns and synonyms. Use colors and/or symbols.

Example: "Word" is a repeated word that is **key** to understanding John 1.

- **Lists**

The next step is to list what the chapter says about each of the key words. Look at each place you marked a key word and list what the text says.

A **list** is a compilation of the facts given about a particular word or person. It gives the 5 Ws and H (who, what, when, where, why, how) about that word or person. Use words from the text.

A list about the **Word** from John 1 begins this way:

was in the beginning, v. 1

was with God, v. 1

was God, v. 1

was in the beginning with God, v. 2

• **Mark and evaluate:**

Contrasts—point out differences. To mark a contrast, put a symbol in the margin by the verse(s), such as *N*.

John 1:17: “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.”

“But,” “however,” or “nevertheless” might indicate a contrast.

John 4:2: “...Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were....”

Comparisons—point out similarities. To mark a comparison, put a symbol in the margin by the verse(s), such as *=*.

John 10:9: “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved....”

Sometimes “like” or “as” indicate a comparison.

John 3:14-15: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.”

Terms of Conclusion—show that a conclusion or summary is being made. These help us understand “why.”

Look for the words signifying a conclusion or result such as “therefore,” “for this reason,” and “finally.”

John 12:50: “I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

Expressions of Time—give timing, sequence of events, or progression.

Look for words such as “then,” “after,” “when,” “until,” “the day of....”

John 1:2: “He was in the beginning with God.”

• **Identify subjects or themes**

Identify main subjects, events, or points of a chapter by observing it paragraph by paragraph. Paragraphs can be shown with boldface type for the first verse number of a paragraph, by a paragraph symbol, or by an indention at the beginning of a paragraph.

Read each paragraph, and in the margin list the event, subject, or main point of the paragraph.

John 1:6-8

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.

*John testified
about the Light*

7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.