

Waiting on the Second Coming (Part 2)

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LESSON 1

The Big Picture (Part 1)

Because the nature of a people is to resist change, it is natural that the infant Church quickly began to acquire its share of adversaries. And because the Christian Church actually had its roots inside the Jewish faith, it is equally natural that its first enemies would come from the Jews. The Jews were God's chosen people, and as such, they regarded anyone going against the established teachings as going against the will of God. Their opposition to the Church must be viewed in light of their belief that they were called to protect and preserve the only religion that worshiped the one true God.

On the other side of the coin, Paul was anointed by God to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the peoples of the world and to plant new churches in their midst. Although Paul states emphatically that he was the apostle to the Gentiles, whenever he entered a new town, he went first to the synagogue to reason with the people there. Many Jews then, in *addition* to the Gentiles he ministered to, were persuaded to join him in the new faith. The defection of even a few Jews was a serious affront to those who called themselves God's Chosen, and so it is not surprising they responded with a resistance that eventually erupted in violence.

After presenting the Gospel to the people of Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were compelled to slip away during the night in order to avoid a potentially serious confrontation with the zealous protectors of the Jewish faith. And when Paul and Silas moved on to Berea, they were followed by some who came from Thessalonica to stir up the crowds against them in that city as well. When Paul finally reaches Corinth and writes to his beloved believers in Thessalonica, he is concerned about their safety and about how their faith is holding up under the attacks.

In 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, we see the effects of their persecution at the hand of the Jews.

I. WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

1. Before we begin our study of Paul's second letter to the believers in Thessalonica, we need to look briefly at his first letter to them. Begin with prayer, asking God for wisdom and clarity of thought. Let Him guide you in what He wants you to glean from the book.
2. Using the WordSheets that are included in the Appendix of your workbook, read the entire book of First Thessalonians in one sitting. As you read, look for the following points and keep a record of your findings.

- How the book relates to Philippians 4:15-16
- How Paul feels about the recipients
- Why Paul feels it necessary to write the letter to them

Note: Before answering Questions 3, 4, and 5, read the entire book of First Thessalonians a second time. You might want to read the Questions first so that you know what to be looking for.

3. What evidence do we find in 1 Thessalonians that gives a clue as to the degree of commitment the believers in Thessalonica have towards their new belief?
4. What evidence do we find in 1 Thessalonians as to the fact that the believers have already suffered for their faith?

5. Although Paul makes it clear that he values and respects their commitment to walk and please God, what else does he want to see according to Chapter 4, verse 1?

II. QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ASKED

1. What topic does Paul bring up in Chapter 4, verse 13 and continue through Chapter 5, verse 11?

2. Why do you think Paul might be concerning himself with writing about this particular subject at this particular time?

3. Look at each of these references to a future event and decide what event you think the author is referring to. Be sure to record what the author calls the event, as well as what you believe that term is referring to according to the context.
 - **Chapter 1, vv.9-10—**

 - **Chapter 2, vv.19-20—**

 - **Chapter 3, vv.11-13—**

- **Chapter 4, vv.13-18—**
- **Chapter 5, vv.1-11—**

4. Before you finish with the assignment, go back and mark each of the above passages with a unique notation so that you can easily locate them later.

WRAPPING IT UP

In Paul's first letter to the new church at Thessalonica, we see his profound love for the believers he left in a hurry and under such stressful circumstances. We feel his concern for them and his sincere desire to go visit with them again. It doesn't seem strange to us then that Paul would write a second letter. In fact, as we go deeper into our study, we will see he apparently stayed abreast of their status through frequent correspondence and messengers going back and forth.

In your next assignment, you will be looking at the book of Second Thessalonians as a whole. You will want to keep in mind the contents of First Thessalonians as you read so as to get a better idea about what must have happened between the writing of the two letters. Approaching the book in this way will give you insight as to how to interpret Second Thessalonians.

It is this kind of connecting-the-Bible-together that makes the study of His Word exciting. God is faithful to give us all the clues we need in order to understand His book correctly. All we have to do is put it all together. That is the aim of the Easy-to-Learn Inductive Bible Studies from Word Among Us Ministries, Inc.

LESSON 2

The Big Picture (Part 2)

Now that you have acquainted yourself with the *big picture* of First Thessalonians, you are better equipped to understand Paul's second letter to the believers in Thessalonica. There is still additional work to be done, however, before you begin the read of the letter itself.

In your last assignment, you explored the context of Paul's first letter to the believers at Thessalonica. Now we need to go back a little further and look at what brought Paul to that neck of the woods in the first place. The best way to do that is for you to read the scriptures for yourself. So in the first half of this assignment, we'll take you to selected scriptures that will give you the history behind Paul's getting to Thessalonica. In the second half, we'll look at the *Big Picture* of the book of Second Thessalonians itself.

To effectively understand the Bible, it is important that you not rush the process. Many of us—especially in today's hectic life-style—are far too anxious to get to the bottom line. We are quick to demand: "Just tell me what it means!" God did not intend that we give His precious Word a quick once-over. And to prevent this from happening, He wrote the Bible in such a way that we must spend time exploring more of the Bible than the text-under-study alone. In the case of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, we must have at least a general idea of how Paul came to know the Thessalonians. After all, in God's world, things do not happen just by chance.

I. PAUL'S ROAD TO THESSALONICA

1. Begin the study session with a time of prayer and meditation. Ask God to be your teacher and to give you the wisdom you need for understanding His Word in the light in which He wrote it.

2. Read Acts 13:1-3. How did Paul *happen* to begin his missionary journeys in the first place? What role did the Church play in this? Who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey?

3. Read Acts 15:35-41. What area is included in Paul's second missionary journey? Who accompanies Paul on this second journey? And why?

4. Read Acts 16:6-12.

- Apparently Paul's plans were to go into Asia but he did not make it. What happened to prevent his going there?

- Then what happens a little later when Paul tries to go into Bithynia?

- Can you draw any conclusion about how to live your life from this?

- List the cities that Paul visits in Macedonia after he crosses over the Aegean Sea.
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

5. Read Acts 16:13-15.

- What does Paul do on that Sabbath day in Philippi?

- What do you learn about Lydia in the passage?

6. Read Acts 16:16-24.

What does Paul do for the slave girl?

- What is the reaction of her masters?

- What is the result as far as Paul and Silas are concerned?

7. Read Acts 16:25-34. Briefly list the main events of the passage.

8. Read Acts 16:35-40.

- What does Paul demand once the jailer tells him that he and Silas are free to go?

- How do the chief magistrates react to Paul's claim?

9. Read Acts 17:1-4.

- Where do Paul and Silas then go and where do they end up?

- What is Paul's usual custom upon arriving in a new town?

- What kind of results does he have in Thessalonica?

II. SECOND THESSALONIANS AS A COMPLETE WORK

1. In order to interpret what God is wanting to tell us in 2nd Thessalonians, we need a good grasp on what the book as a whole is about. We call this "getting the *big picture*." It's our careful examination of the *big picture* that sets the context of the book and prevents us from going off "half-cocked" in our interpretation.

Begin by reading through the whole book in its entirety. Don't allow outside disturbances to distract you. If you are interrupted, begin at the beginning when you come back to your study. The book is only three chapters, so you should be able to read all of it in one sitting even if you have to start over several times. After you have read the entire book, record your initial impression below.

2. From your cursory reading of the book, what would say are some of the main concerns that Paul addresses?
3. In the first few reads of any book of the Bible, we frequently encounter interpretive challenges that leave us feeling clueless. Before the study is complete, however, we hope to have a handle on most of these challenges. Read through 2nd Thessalonians again and mark any issues or passages that you find confusing with three (3) question marks. List these issues below:

By the time we complete this course, we hope to have a definitive answer to most of these questions.

III. TYPE OF LITERATURE

1. The Bible is a library of sixty-six books, and within this collection we find several different types of literature. A book can be historical like Genesis or Matthew, poetic like Psalms, proverbial like Proverbs, prophetic like Isaiah or Revelation, an epistle like Galatians, or a combination of any of these (such as Daniel's being a combination of historical and prophetic.)

What type of literature did you find 2nd Thessalonians to be? Give the rationale/proof for your answer.

2. Any letter we write using current-day formats will have a greeting, a recipient(s), a reason why we are writing the letter (sometimes stated in the letter, sometimes not), a closing to the letter and the name of the person sending the letter.

Which of these elements do you find in the book of 2nd Thessalonians? [List below.]

IV. AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

1. Read through 2nd Thessalonians again and this time mark every reference to the author with its own unique color, highlight or icon. Be sure to use the same unique mark for every pronoun (we/us/our *and* I/me/mine) or synonym that refers to the author.
2. Who does the text tell us that the author is? [List the references that substantiate your finding.]
3. Using the chart “**Author and Recipients**” (found in the Appendix) and the references you marked in #1 above, list everything you learn about the author.
4. Enter the name of the author in the applicable area on the Chart “**The Big Picture.**”

V. RECIPIENTS

1. Every letter has an intended recipient. Read through the entire book of 2nd Thessalonians again and mark every reference to the recipient(s). Use a unique color, highlight or icon in order to distinguish the recipient(s) from

other markings. Be sure to include pronouns/synonyms that refer to the recipient.

If the pronouns we/us/our include the recipient as well as the author, mark these with the recipients unique marking as well. They should already be marked for “author.”

2. Record everything you learn about the recipient(s) on the Chart **“Author and Recipients.”**
3. Enter the name of the recipient(s) in the area for it on the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**
4. What seems to be the Author’s evaluation of the recipients?
5. How does the author’s feelings in 2nd Thessalonians compare with how he appeared to feel towards them in 1st Thessalonians?

VI. THEME AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

1. You are ready now to determine the theme of the book; in other words, decide what the main subject of the book is. Theme and purpose are closely related. If the author writes about the price of tea in China, we would assume his purpose in writing is to tell us about the price of tea in China. On the other hand, if he tells us his purpose is to educate us on the price of tea, then we would expect him to write about that subject.

Whether you determine the theme or the purpose first depends largely on the book. Sometimes the author makes an overt purpose statement, such as “I am writing these things so that...” Other times, it may simply be implied. If he does either, the place to start would obviously be to determine purpose. If there is no stated or implied purpose within the text, you may prefer to start by determining theme. The choice is yours.

2. In the study of 2nd Thessalonians, we can start with either the purpose or the theme. Begin by writing down anything you find that appears to be an answer to a question that has been raised by the believers. Then look for anything that appears to be in response to something the author has heard *about* them. List as many as you can find and be sure to cite chapter and verse.

3. Now list some of the main things the author talks about in the book. [Do not worry about having some over-lap with what you wrote in #2.]

4. Now read the book slowly and meditatively one more time, marking the following key words, each with its own distinctive color, highlight or icon. [Remember to mark synonyms and related pronouns in the same manner as the key word they represent.]
 - Give thanks, pray
 - Jesus
 - God
 - The Holy Spirit
 - Glory, glorified
 - Suffering, persecutions, afflictions
 - The day of the Lord
 - The coming of Jesus Christ and any synonyms
 - The man of lawlessness
5. Condense your “purpose” statements from #2 above into one succinct statement and record in the appropriate area on the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**
6. Taking the key words from #4 above into consideration, as well as the list of the main topics the author writes about (from #3 above), write a simple statement that sums up what the book is about. Record here.

Whittle out the unnecessary words and try to bring this statement down to eight words or less. [Do not be rigid about this number. If it takes more in order to be a meaningful statement for you, so be it.] Record your title below.

Test the title against the “theme” and “purpose” of the book. Are they consistent? Do they accurately reflect what the book is trying to tell us? Can you recall what the book is about just by looking at your title?

7. Record your Book Title at the top of the Chart **“The Big Picture.”** On the second line, give a reference that supports the title you chose.

VII. CHAPTER TITLES [Optional—For Advanced Students]

1. One last assignment and we are through for the week. Just as we determined a title for the book as a whole, we now want to develop titles for each of the individual chapters.

Read through the book, chapter by chapter this time. As you read a chapter, pay close attention to the key words that you have marked in that chapter, as well as the Book Title you have given the book as a whole. Determine what this chapter is about (the main subject) and write a title giving that information. If you can use words right from the scripture, that is better.

2. When you have given a title to all three chapters, check to see that the titles flow from one chapter to the next and then into the Book Title.
3. Record your chapter titles at the top of the WordSheet for each chapter. Then transfer these to the Chart **“The Big Picture.”**

WRAPPING IT UP

You have just completed the overview of 2nd Thessalonians. When we use inductive reasoning (moving from the particular to the general) to interpret scripture, we must first establish the over-all framework of the book. This insures that we do not carry the conclusions we draw further than God intended them to go. We're able to establish such boundaries by stepping back and looking at the book as a whole. Our objective is to determine the (1) over-all theme of the book and (2) why it was written. Then every interpretation we subsequently make must fit within the parameters of those two limits.

Completing the overview is a difficult, yet extremely important, step towards our arriving at an accurate interpretation. While we may be tempted to rush through the process in order to get to the bottom line, we must take the time to do this step conscientiously. We will be blessed with a richer, fuller—and more accurate—understanding of the scriptures when we do.

LESSON 3

The Church at Thessalonica (Chapter 1)

Last week you completed the overview of 2nd Thessalonians as a single unit. Now you are ready to begin looking at each chapter in greater detail.

An “inductive” approach to Bible study begins with **observing** what the text says. There is no interpretation at this point. We stick to the actual words of the text as much as possible. The moment we bring our own words into the mix, we have introduced commentary and it’s no longer what it says, but our *opinion* of what it says.

Then once we have observed the passage thoroughly, we are ready to move on to **interpreting** what we have observed. If observation answers the question “What does the passage say?”, interpretation answers the question: “What does the passage mean?” This is the part of study that students generally enjoy most and all too frequently jump into much too quickly. We want to be sure we do not fall prey to that temptation. Incorrect or insufficient observation may cause incorrect interpretation and the purpose of inductive study is to gain the most *correct* interpretation that we possibly can.

Only after the completion of thorough observation and conscientious interpretation shall we attempt **applying** the meaning of a passage to the way we live our lives. If incorrect or insufficient observation leads to incorrect interpretation, then we can be assured that incorrect interpretation will lead to the application of an actual non-truth in our lives. The affects of that can be disastrous.

So there you have it—observation, interpretation, application. Our task in this study of the book of 2nd Thessalonians is to understand what is involved in each of these and then to apply what we learn to our approach to the book. It promises to be an exciting study.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. The study of scripture must always be undergirded with prayer. Solomon asked God for a wise and discerning heart and it was given to Him. God will do the same for you if you ask. Before you begin the assignment, then, be sure to set aside time to get on your knees before Him. Invite Him to be your teacher and to guide you in all truth.
2. Using the WordSheets of 2nd Thessalonians found in the Appendix, read through 2nd Thessalonians Chapter 1. By now you should be getting fairly

familiar with what it is saying. As you read the text this time, look for the following:

- any additional key words that were not identified during the overview—(Mark each with its own unique color, highlight or icon.)
 - any lists—(Either write these down on a separate sheet of paper or simply number them directly on the WordSheet, using a unique color for each list.)
 - the phrase “so that”—(or any series of words that mean the same as “so that”)
3. Mark all terms of conclusion (therefore, hence, wherefore, etc.)
 4. Mark any references to time—either as to the time a particular event happens (or will happen), or as to the duration of an event.
 5. Re-examine the title you created for Chapter 1 during the overview and determine if it still describes the chapter as you see it now. Revise this title as needed in light of your new insight into what the chapter is about.
 6. Now consider each paragraph in the chapter individually. Read the paragraph and create a title for it. Pencil that title in the left margin opposite the first verse in the paragraph. You may either use the paragraph divisions below or create paragraphs according to your preferences.
 - Vv.1-2
 - Vv. 3-10
 - Vv.11-12

Your objective in creating titles is to have paragraph titles/themes that flow smoothly into chapter titles and chapter titles that flow smoothly into the book title. The end result is an outline that aids understanding of the book *before* you even begin to interpret. When you are satisfied with your paragraph titles/themes, transfer them to the chart “**The Big Picture.**”

II. DIGGING DEEPER

1. At this point in your study, you have completed an overview of the entire book (Lesson 1) and now in this lesson an overview of Chapter 1. From here, we’ll dig deeper into the meaning of this first chapter.
2. In 2nd Thessalonians, Chapter 1, Paul speaks of praying on behalf of the believers in Thessalonica. In your overview of the book, you marked the words, “give thanks” and “pray.” Look for the use of these words in Chapter 1 *and* in Chapter 2; then record the reasons Paul prays or gives thanks for the believers in Thessalonica.

Gives thanks:

1)

2)

3)

4)

Prays for them that they:

1)

2)

3. According to 1:4, Paul is particularly proud of the believers in Thessalonica because:

4. We want to compare this with the reasons Paul gives in 1 Thessalonians for giving thanks for the believers. Start by making a list of the reasons he gives thanks for them in 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thess 1:2-3—

1 Thess 1:4—

1 Thess 1:6—

1 Thess 1:7—

1 Thess 1:9b—

1 Thess 2:13—

1 Thess 3:9—

5. Back in 2nd Thessalonians 1, read vv.5-10 again. Answer the following:
- In your opinion, what does the word “this” at the beginning of v.5 refer to?

 - According to the “so that” in v.5, what value does the persecution/affliction they are suffering have in the bigger scheme of things?

 - In His justice, what will God do to those who persecute the believers?

 - In His mercy, what will God do to those who are persecuted?

 - When will God repay with affliction those who afflict and when will He give relief to those who are afflicted?

 - Who are the ones that will pay the penalty of “eternal destruction”?

 - Where will that eternal destruction take place?
6. Read Matthew 25:46. The word “eternal” that is used to describe the duration of the life awarded to the righteous is the same word that is used to describe the duration of the punishment for those who did not serve the master. How long do both the life and the punishment last?

7. Read the references listed in the table below. Complete the columns as to how each references relates to the punishment of the non-believer.

Punishment and Its Duration

Reference	Who Is Involved	Punishment	Duration
Daniel 12:2			
Matthew 3:12			
Matthew 25:41			
Mark 9:44-49			
Luke 16:23-24			
Revelation 14:10-11			
Revelation 20:10			

8. From what you have observed in the preceding scriptures, what do you conclude about the **duration** of the torment that is meted out to non-believers?

9. According to vv.11-12, what is the purpose for our striving to be worthy of our calling?

WRAPPING IT UP

The word grace—the undeserved favor God bestows upon us—is used twice in this first chapter of Paul’s second letter to the church at Thessalonica. The first time we see it is in the greeting Paul used when he wished grace and peace for his readers as God’s gift to them. The second use of the word came at the conclusion of the chapter when Paul prayed that the name of Jesus Christ would be glorified in the believers—which was something that was possible only as a direct result of God’s grace residing in them.

Without His grace, we are nothing and we accomplish nothing. With it, we are able to accomplish all things that He has called us to do. Through no merit of our own, we are able to serve Him in mighty ways and be considered worthy of His kingdom.

God loves us by grace, He forgives us by grace, He gives eternal comfort by grace. Grace is the very foundation of our relationship with Him.

LESSON 4

The Day of the Lord (Chapter 2)

The second chapter of 2nd Thessalonians deals primarily with the subject of what Paul calls the day of the Lord. Apparently, he received word either through correspondence or a messenger that the believers had read a fake letter stating that the day of the Lord had already come. Undoubtedly, the people were quite distressed at the thought that the day had come and they had been left behind. Paul writes to correct the false teaching and to comfort them by showing logically how this could not *possibly* be true.

Paul's counsel in v.3 is just as relevant to us today as it was back then. "Let no one in any way deceive you." We are constantly bombarded with strange and erroneous teachings concerning the events and timing of end times. This is a popular tactic of false teachers—to confuse the minds of the confused in order to gain followers for their own brand of teaching. Unless we make the conscious effort to educate ourselves with the Word of God, we can easily be led afield. We must be well informed as to what the scriptures actually teach in Daniel, Matthew, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians and Revelation, in particular, and the whole counsel of God's Word in general. Solid Biblical knowledge, coupled with the wisdom only God can provide, is our best protection against the false teachers that abound.

This is not a comprehensive study of end times—our two-semester course on the book of Revelation is recommended for that. In this study of the book of 2nd Thessalonians, we strive only to acquaint ourselves with the timing of what Paul refers to here as "the day of the Lord." This is a topic that is challenging enough for the present time. Getting a good understanding of this complex passage now will be a great help in learning the more comprehensive study on end times when you take our course on Revelation later.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. Begin your study in this session by calling on the Lord to be your teacher. Proverbs 3:5 tells us to "lean not on our own understanding." Since no one knows the book better than the One who wrote it, we will learn best by sitting at His feet. Ask Him for knowledge of the Truth and the wisdom with which to apply that Truth to your life.
2. Using the WordSheets of 2nd Thessalonians found in the Appendix at the back of your workbook, read through Chapter 2 several times before looking at the first question in your assignment.

3. Read through Chapter 2 another time and this time, look for the following:
 - any additional key words that were not identified during the overview as key to the entire book— (words may be key to a chapter, but not the book as a whole.)
 - any lists— (Either record your lists on a separate sheet of paper or simply number them directly on the WordSheet. Use a unique color for each new list you find.)
 - the phrase “so that”— (and every phrase that means the same as “so that”)
4. Mark all references to time. Keep in mind that time may be expressed in terms of an event, rather than a specific day or date. Duration of an event is also an expression of time. [Expressions of time answer the question “When?”]
5. Re-examine the title you created for Chapter 2 during the overview in Lesson 2. Does your title describe the chapter as you see it now? Feel free to revise it if you deem necessary so that it actually tells you what you’d expect to read about in the chapter.
6. When you are comfortable with your chapter title, move on to creating titles for each paragraph in the chapter. Pencil your chapter titles in the left margin opposite the first line of the chapter. You may use the paragraph divisions provided for you below or create your own.
 - Vv.1-12
 - Vv.13-15
 - Vv.16-17

For more information on creating paragraph titles, see Lesson 3, Roman numeral I, question 6. When you are satisfied with your paragraph titles/themes, transfer them to the chart **“The Big Picture.”**

II. DIGGING DEEPER (The Day of the Lord)

1. Observation, *then* interpretation! You have now completed a thorough observation of Chapter 2 and so are ready to begin digging a little deeper and interpreting “what-does-it-say” into “what-does-it-mean.”
2. Our first objective is to put the events mentioned in vv.3-12 in to the correct time. Begin by listing the events of vv.1-2 in the area provided below.
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

NOTE: If you do not see that there are three events mentioned in these first two verses, that is okay. But for the sake of this particular exercise, try to find three events to list even if you have to force it. You may find later that two of these are actually the same event, or even that all three of them are the same. But for now, we want to list them as three.

3. According to v.2, which of these does the deception appear to be about?

4. Before you go any farther, be sure you know what the "it" in v.3 refers to and have it marked with the same color, highlight or icon you used to make this entity elsewhere. Then carefully re-read vv.3-8 several times and answer the following questions:
 - According to v.8, can the day of the Lord and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ be the same event? Why or why not?

 - According to v.3 exclusively (do not pull from any other verses for the answer), what two things must occur *before* this event will happen?
 - 1)

 - 2)

 - List these on a separate sheet of paper in the order given in scripture. Leave several inches of space below the first so that other events can be added without having to move either one.

 - When the man of lawlessness is revealed, what does he do? [Also record this event on your list right *after* the lawless one is revealed.]

 - Now look at vv.6-8 together. Who/what must be removed before the lawless one will be revealed? [Answer below and then record this event on your list right *before* the lawless one is revealed.]

 - What happens to the lawless one when the Lord comes again? [Answer below and then record this event on your list right *after* the lawless one takes his seat in the temple of God.]

 - Record the coming of the Lord at the bottom of your list.

5. Re-read vv.3-8 and examine the details of the list you made on a separate sheet of paper. Have you included all the activities that are mentioned in

the scripture? If so, take a colored pencil and number the events on your WordSheet (2nd Thessalonians Chapter 2) in the order that the events actually occur according to your list on the separate sheet of paper.

NOTE: If an event is mentioned more than once, you might want to assign the same number to it each time that it is mentioned.

6. We need to address the issue of what the day of the Lord *is*. Look up the following scriptures and record what you learn about the day of the Lord.

[NOTE: If you have not yet taken our course on Revelation, you may not have the background in prophecy to understand fully what the Old Testament prophets are talking about. For now, just try to get a feeling for the kind of times the author is describing with the term “the day of the Lord”; i.e., happy days, prosperous times, days of God’s wrath, etc.]

Obadiah 1:1a, 10, 15-18—

Zephaniah 1:1-18—

Malachi 4:5—

Acts 2:17-21—

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11—

2 Peter 3:10—

7. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9. What is the teaching the believers in Thessalonica would already have *before* Paul writes what he does in 2 Thessalonians 2:2?

8. Return to our text in 2 Thessalonians 2. What does Paul say in v.1 that he is writing about?

Do you see a connection with 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18?

9. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, what does Paul *not* want them to be disturbed by?

10. What possible reason would the believers have for being disturbed by the fact that the day of the Lord has already started?

How does this relate to 1 Thessalonians 5:9?

11. What timing would this imply for the event of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 that we refer to as the “Rapture”?

III. DIGGING DEEPER (Chosen and Called)

1. Re-read the passage 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15. According to this passage, what two things are true about the believers?
 - a)
 - b)

2. [Optional: for those with Word Study tools] Look up both of the words in #1 above and record your findings for each.

3. [Optional: for those with Word Study tools] Also look up the word translated *calling* in 2 Thessalonians 1:11. Note the relationship between this word and the word *called* in Chapter 2, verse 14.

4. According to v.15, what to commands does Paul give the believers?

a)

b)

5. In that same verse, what are the two ways the believers in Thessalonica would have received the Gospel?

a)

b)

Wrapping It Up

In his second letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul makes us aware of his heavy concern about the Thessalonians' belief they had missed the day of the Lord by devoting a third of his words to the topic. He is mainly explaining why it is impossible that the day has already started—but considering the Biblical description of the day of the Lord, it's not likely the Thessalonians were disappointed they had missed out on that. More likely, their composure was shaken because if the day of the Lord had already started that would mean they had missed the “rapture” he reminded them about in his first letter. In other

words, according to the teaching Paul had given while he was in their midst, the believers did not expect to be on earth to witness the wrath of the great day of the Lord.

Undoubtedly, they also remembered Paul's teaching in his first letter to them when he said, "God has not destined us for wrath..."

Paul admonishes his readers not to take stock in false rumors, but to "stand firm and hold to the traditions" he had taught them face-to-face and in his letters to them. He reminds them once again that God loves them and desires to bring them comfort and good hope.

LESSON 5

Living According to the Bible (Chapter 3)

Apparently Paul was a great believer in the principle we hold near to our hearts as well—“It doesn’t matter how much of the Bible you know, it matters how much of the Bible you live out in your life.” Paul’s epistles to the early-day Church were always peppered with principles for daily living. He never missed an opportunity to teach what the Christian choice would look like in any given situation. He wanted the followers of Christ to exhibit the character of Christ in their dealings with each other and with the world and he taught it constantly in his letters to them.

His second letter to the believers in Thessalonica is no exception.

Perhaps because this second letter is so short or because his concern for their misunderstanding of end times is so great, the principles for living in this book are uniquely linked by a common theme and closely tied to the truths he is teaching at the time. In Chapter 2 we’ve already seen two exhortations to the believers: (1) “Let no one in any way deceive you”; and (2) “Stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught...” Both of these were given as they related to his teaching about the day of the Lord and against the many rumors that abounded in Paul’s time concerning that day.

In 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3, we will see the rest of Paul’s exhortations—his commands—to the believers at Thessalonica. Before we conclude this course, we will want to be certain that we are able to apply each of these principles for living to our own daily lives. But once again, before we apply we must first fully understand what they say and what they mean.

I. OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. No study is effective and reliable unless it is under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is imperative, then, that you begin each session with prayer, asking God to be the Teacher and to lead you in Truth. As we conclude our study of 2nd Thessalonians with this lesson, ask Him to clarify issues you still do not understand and to help you see the book from His perspective at the time He wrote it as well as now.
2. Using the WordSheets of 2nd Thessalonians included in the Appendix at the back of the workbook, read through Chapter 3 several times before going any farther with the assignment.
3. Now read through the chapter again and as you read this time, look for the following:

- any additional key words that were not marked during the overview in Lesson 2
 - any lists (for additional information on lists, see Lesson 4, Roman numeral I, question 3)
 - the phrase “so that” (marked in the same manner you marked it in prior lessons)
4. Re-examine the title you created for Chapter 3 during the overview (Lesson 2). Does your title describe the chapter as you see it now? Feel free to revise as necessary to fit your enlightened understanding of the chapter.
 5. Using either the paragraph divisions given below or those you determine for yourself, create a title for each paragraph in Chapter 3. Pencil your titles in the left margin opposite the first line of the paragraph.
 - Vv.1-5
 - Vv.6-15
 - V.16
 - Vv.17-18

For more information on creating paragraph titles, see Lesson 3, Roman numeral I, question 6. When you are satisfied with your paragraph titles, transfer them to the chart “**The Big Picture.**”

II. DIGGING DEEPER

1. What two prayer requests does Paul make of the believers in Thessalonica according to vv.1-2?
2. What does the word “perverse” mean to you? [Use an English dictionary if you are not sure.]
3. Why do you suppose Paul feels a need to be delivered from perverse and evil men?
4. To whom or what do you suppose Paul is referring when he uses the term “evil one” in v.3?

5. [Optional: For those with Word Study tools] Using your Greek Word Study tools, look up the word translated “evil one” in the NASB.

6. The Greek word translated “evil one” in the NASB is also used in John 17:15 and Ephesians 6:16. Look up these references and record any insight you might gain from them as to the meaning of the Greek Word translated “evil one.”

7. Read through vv.6-15 and underline every exhortation, command or instruction Paul gives to the believers in Thessalonica. Then list each of them in the space below.

- What appears to be the common problem towards which all these instructions are directed? [HINT: What kind of person is Paul warning them against?]
- Considering the context of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, what might be a reason that some of the believers are not working?

8. Consider the role model Paul himself provided during his stay with the Thessalonians:

- List everything Paul did that he considers an example they should follow.

- Did Paul and those traveling with him have a right to receive their support from the Thessalonian believers? Consider the following scripture in your answer:

1 Corinthians 9:4-14—

Galatians 6:6—

- Why did Paul not claim this right (according to the “that,” “so that” and “in order that” you marked in vv.8-9?

9. What is the purpose Paul gives for the believer's not associating with the brother who does not work (according to the "so that" you marked)?
10. At first glance, Paul's words concerning the brother who does not work may sound harsh. However, God is a God of balance and no scripture in the Bible can be read all by itself. We must read every verse in light of the entire counsel of God's Word. Consider 2nd Thessalonians 3:6-15 in light of the scriptures listed below. Record whatever additional insight you might gain.

Matthew 18:15-20—

1 Corinthians 5:1-13—

Galatians 6:1-5—

1 Timothy 5:19-20—

12. What application do you see for today in the teaching from 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15?

Does the teaching apply to the way we respond to the people of the world or just to the way we respond to the brothers?

11. According to v.17, what can the reader know about the “greeting” of this letter?

What significance would this fact have upon this letter?

Wrapping It Up

The bulk of Paul’s second letter to the church in Thessalonica is devoted to clarifying the teaching he gave on end times while he was with them. Perhaps some of the believers had become confused during the interim, but others had simply been misled by the false teachers who were trying to stir up trouble for Paul.

Times have not changed much since Paul’s day. Only the Bible contains the truth—straight from the mouth of God—about the return of Christ and the events leading up to that return. While most believers acknowledge the authority of the scriptures, many are way too quick to believe the opinions of man rather than seeking the truth directly from God. As a result, one bizarre teaching after another finds its way into the hearts and minds of Christians around the world and people no longer know what to believe.

To avoid falling for the same erroneous teachings about end times as did some of the believers in Thessalonica, we must diligently search God’s Word for ourselves. Armed with the truth as God teaches, we will then be able to stand against the rumors and the false teachings that are going to abound more and more as the day approaches.

APPENDIX

Second Thessalonians Chapter 1

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ²Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We 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. ⁵This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. ⁶For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹And 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. ¹¹To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; ¹²in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second Thessalonians Chapter 2

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, ² that you may 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. ³Let 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, ⁴who 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. ⁵Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. ⁸And 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; ⁹that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰and 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. ¹¹And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, ¹²in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

¹³But 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. ¹⁴And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

¹⁶Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

Second Thessalonians Chapter 3

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; ²and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. ³But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. ⁵And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

⁶Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; ⁹not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we used to

give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. ¹³But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. ¹⁴And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. ¹⁵And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

¹⁶Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

¹⁷I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

First Thessalonians Chapter 1

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; ⁵ for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and

to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is
Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

First Thessalonians Chapter 2

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,
² but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. ³ For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts. ⁵ For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed-- God is witness-- ⁶ nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. ⁷ But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. ⁸ Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. ⁹ For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and

blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; ¹¹ just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, ¹² so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

¹³ And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, ¹⁶ hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while-- in person, not in spirit-- were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once-- and yet Satan thwarted us. ¹⁹ For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it

not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

First Thessalonians Chapter 3

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone;² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,³ so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.⁴ For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.⁵ For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,⁷ for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;⁸ for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.⁹ For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,¹⁰ as we night and day keep praying

most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; ¹² and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

First Thessalonians Chapter 4

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.² For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;⁴ that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,⁵ not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;⁶ and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.⁷ For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.⁸ Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

⁹ Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;¹⁰ for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; ¹² so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

First Thessalonians Chapter 5

Chapter Theme: _____

Key Verse(s): _____

¹ Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

¹² But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. ¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil.

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

²⁵ Brethren, pray for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.