

PRECEPT
UPON
PRECEPT

2 Thessalonians

SO YOU WON'T BE DECEIVED
ABOUT HIS COMING

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

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PAGE	LESSONS
1	LESSON ONE: Overview
19	LESSON TWO: Observation Worksheet on 2 Thessalonians I
33	LESSON THREE: Observation Worksheet on 2 Thessalonians 2
39	LESSON FOUR: The Church's Future and Her Relationship to the Day of the Lord
51	LESSON FIVE: Observation Worksheet on 2 Thessalonians 3/Prayer
59	LESSON SIX: The Evil One/Work
	 A P P E N D I X
75	Observation Worksheets
81	About Precept Ministries International

HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY

How to Study Your Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994

The New Inductive Study Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2000

Greek Word Study Tools

Commentaries on 2 Thessalonians

(See commentary list below)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

BAXTER, J. SIDLOW

Explore the Book

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.

GUTHRIE, DONALD

The Pastoral Epistles. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries

Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990

MORRIS, LEON

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990

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

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

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

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 Observation Worksheets on 2 Thessalonians, located in the Appendix
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. Whether or not the author knew he was being supernaturally inspired by God Almighty to record God's mind, heart, wisdom, and instruction in what would be called the Holy Bible, we really do not know. However, we do know we have a compilation of sixty-six different books, all inspired by the Spirit of God and without error, written over a period of 1600 years by approximately forty men. This knowledge is enough. However, to plumb the depths of God's Book is the task of a lifetime.

This study will help you to move forward in your God-appointed task so that when your Lord appears, you will be found a workman approved unto God. If you are a child of God, you have the Holy Spirit, your resident teacher. He will lead you and guide you into all truth, so make prayer an integral part of your study.

1. 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 Precept Upon Precept*.

The purpose of this first lesson is to discover the context of the book of 2 Thessalonians. This is the most important lesson you will do because it lays the foundation for all the other lessons. Since context always rules in interpretation and Scripture must always be interpreted in light of its context, the first step in your study of any book of the Bible is to begin with the **Overview**, the view of the entire book, to discover the context.

The process for discovering the context is to begin by looking for the **obvious** things that are mentioned in a particular book of the Bible. As we teach in our

nationwide training workshops¹ there are three things that are always obvious, easy to see: people, places, and events.

If you will begin by observing the obvious, then the things within a book that are not easy to see or understand will become clearer as your study stays focused on the obvious. Understanding the context will help you in your interpretation of the unclear, obscure, difficult to understand parts of any book.

2. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 17, then write out 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 because he is the first person mentioned in this book. 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.

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

Use the Observation Worksheets, located in the Appendix, for every assignment. 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 do your work on them, and at a later date you might want to transfer some of your study notes to your Bible.²

4. Before you begin this assignment, read all of the directions.
 - a. Using your marked Observation Worksheets, read all three chapters of 2 Thessalonians again. As you read, look carefully at every place you marked the author and see if it answers one of the following **5 Ws and an H** (who, what, when, where, why, how) kinds of questions that uniquely describe the author.

¹ Every child of God should attend these workshops. They will revolutionize your relationship to the Word of God and also serve as an equipping school for the work of ministry God has for you. For more information, go to www.precept.org, or contact Precept Ministries International, P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422, 800-763-8280.

² *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.

- b. If one of the questions is answered, then using the same color you used to mark the references to the author, write the answer in the appropriate chapter column on the “People in 2 Thessalonians” chart, located on page 15. Or if you don’t have a pen in that color, simply highlight what you wrote in the same color you used on your Observation Worksheet.

Who is the author?

What does he say about himself?

What are his circumstances?

What is his relationship to the recipients? **How** does he feel about them?

When in his life is he writing?

The following is an example of how to list the answers on the chart:

PEOPLE IN 2 THESSALONIANS

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
1:1 Paul 1:3 gives thanks to God for them 1:4 Speaks proudly of them		

As shown in the illustration, be brief in your answers. Use words from the text and record the verse that your answer came from. By the way, if you will train yourself to use words right out of the Bible, you will find that you are putting into your mind and heart the very Word(s) of God which are spirit, life, and truth, that which sets you apart, sanctifies you.

As you go through 2 Thessalonians, you will notice that some questions will be answered in more than one place in the text and some verses may answer more than one of the questions. On the other hand, some of the references you marked in the first assignment may not answer the questions. If they don’t answer any of the **5 Ws and an H** questions, don’t record them on the chart.

7. In your observations of Paul today, what have you learned about Paul that you could personally model in your own walk with the Lord?

DAY TWO

Today as we continue to look at 2 Thessalonians as a whole, our study will continue to focus on the people mentioned in the book. As we said before but it bears repeating, when looking for the obvious, people are easy to see.

1. Read all three chapters of 2 Thessalonians and mark on your Observation Worksheets every mention of the recipients. Use a different color from what you used to mark the author. Also be sure to mark all the pronouns for the recipients, such as *you*, *your*, *who*, and any synonyms, like *brethren* and *beloved*.
2. Read 2 Thessalonians again.
 - a. Now write in the appropriate column on the “People in 2 Thessalonians” chart the answers to the following **5 Ws and an H** kinds of questions that **uniquely** describe the recipients:
 - Who** are the recipients?
 - How** are they described?
 - What** are their circumstances?
 - What** event happened that caused Paul to be concerned about them?
 - What** is their relationship to Paul? Have they ever seen him, been with him, or heard from him before this letter?
 - b. Follow the same guidelines you used when you did this process for the author. Use the same color you used to mark the recipients on your Observation Worksheets and use words directly from the text.

Look for just the **obvious** facts that uniquely describe the recipients.

The following is an example of how to record the facts on the chart:

PEOPLE IN 2 THESSALONIANS

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
1:1 Paul 1:3 gives thanks to God for them 1:4 Speaks proudly of them <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> 1:1 Church of the Thessalonians 1:3 Brethren 1:3 Faith is enlarged, love grows greater 1:4 Have perseverance and faith in the midst of enduring persecutions and afflictions		

3. Evaluate your chart and answer the following questions:

- a. Did you see anything about the Thessalonians that would help you discern the historical setting of 2 Thessalonians? If so, add this to your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart under the heading “Historical Setting.”

When you marked the text and listed the answers to the **5 Ws and an H** kinds of questions about the author and the recipients, you discovered certain facts about the historical setting of 2 Thessalonians. Do you realize what has just happened? So many times people think that the **only** way to understand the historical setting of a book is to read commentaries about the Bible, but they aren’t aware that careful observation of the text can reveal this to you. What a blessing this is for people in other countries and language groups who do not have commentaries in their language or easy access to them if they do exist.

- b. What words or topics does the author emphasize in each chapter?

- a. Using a different color or a colored symbol, mark the **exhortations** (encouragements) that Paul gives the Thessalonians. Then using the same color-code, list these exhortations on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart, located on page 16. Think about the context of this letter and ask yourself why each exhortation is given, what is its purpose.
- b. Using another color or colored symbol, mark the **instructions** (commands) Paul gives the Thessalonians. Then using the same color, list these instructions on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. Again think about the context as you list each instruction and think about why that particular instruction is given.
- c. Also mark, using still another color or colored symbol, any **problems** the author addresses. Using that same color, list these on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. Think about how Paul’s exhortations and instructions relate to these problems.

The following is an example of how to list these things on the chart.

Since this book is not printed in color, we have distinguished between the categories as follows:

Exhortations = regular type, no box

Problems = boxed in type

Instructions = underlined type

EXHORTATIONS, PROBLEMS, INSTRUCTIONS

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
1:3 Thanks God for their faith and love 1:4 Speaks proudly of their perseverance and faith in the midst of persecutions and afflictions which you endure	2:2 Request regarding coming of Lord not be shaken or disturbed	3:1 <u>Pray for us</u>

2. Now, take time to review and evaluate what you have listed on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. Look for any key words (important descriptive words) and their synonyms which are repeated several times in the

book. Mark these key words and their synonyms in distinctive ways or colors on this chart. They will help you discover the topics the author addresses.

3. Evaluate the chart again and list below the topics that are addressed in 2 Thessalonians. Be sure to record the chapter and verse location of each topic.
 - a. Paul's purpose for writing 2 Thessalonians
 - b. The summary statement of Paul's main message to the Thessalonians regarding the topics (subjects) covered in this book. Record this in the space provided for the book theme. Be sure to notice how many times Paul refers to things that he had taught them before.

4. Review your "Exhortations, Problems, Instructions" chart, then identify the following and record your insights on your "2 Thessalonians at a Glance" chart:
 - a. Paul's purpose for writing 2 Thessalonians
 - b. The summary statement of Paul's main message to the Thessalonians regarding the topics (subjects) covered in this book. Record this in the space provided for the book theme. Be sure to notice how many times Paul refers to things that he had taught them before.

DAY FOUR

Second Thessalonians is divided into three chapters. These chapter divisions are not divinely inspired; rather, they are man-made divisions, as are the verse divisions. While the chapters, and sometimes the verses, are not always divided in the best way, still they serve to help us identify where specific truths are located by chapter and verse.

Therefore, we are going to honor these chapter divisions as we identify the theme for each chapter that best summarizes the chapter and supports the theme of the book.

1. Read only chapter 1 looking for the theme (main topic) of that chapter.
 - a. As you consider the theme, refer back to your "Exhortations, Problems, Instructions" chart. Evaluate those facts listed in the column for chapter 1.

- b. Which topic is emphasized in chapter 1? How could you summarize what Paul is saying to them in this chapter and also relate to the theme and purpose of 2 Thessalonians?
 - c. When you have determined the theme, write it in the column for chapter 1 on your “**2 Thessalonians at a Glance**” chart.
2. Following the same process, read chapter 2 and chapter 3, one at a time, and identify the theme (main topic) of each chapter. Then write each in the appropriate column on your “**2 Thessalonians at a Glance**” chart.

Fill in any other information necessary to complete your “**2 Thessalonians at a Glance**” chart.

Did any particular thing 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.

Have you ever been shaken or disturbed when you have heard varied teachings about events that are still to come? Or do these not disturb you because you know and understand the Word of God? Such knowledge puts a firmness in your stance when you hold fast to truth, doesn't it? Second Thessalonians is a book that is going to cement you in truth and keep you from being shaken or disturbed. How the church of Jesus Christ needs to take heed to the message it contains!

**DAY
FIVE**

Because 2 Thessalonians is second — not first — it's obvious this isn't the first time Paul has written to these people. To help you gain a better insight into the recipients and possibly confirm what you saw as the theme and the purpose of 2 Thessalonians, compare the following cross-references and see what you can glean about the Thessalonians, their relationship to Paul, their circumstances, and the mutual topics covered in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Record your insights next to each reference.

The Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:3

1 Thessalonians 1:3

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Paul's Relationship to the Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:10

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Suffering

2 Thessalonians 1:7

1 Thessalonians 2:2

1 Thessalonians 3:4

The Day of the Lord

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

A Disciplined Life, Work

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

1 Thessalonians 2:9

1 Thessalonians 4:10b-12

1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

Well, Beloved, you are on your way, and we rejoice over you. We have only five more weeks to go, and what a great and enlightening five weeks it will be. Just remember that whenever you seek to study the Word of God, the enemy is there with all his subtle devices to keep you from putting on your armor and sharpening your one and only offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. So determine in your heart that you are going to finish this study and do it as to the Lord. You won't be sorry.

PEOPLE IN 2 THESSALONIANS

Chapter 1	
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	

EXHORTATIONS, PROBLEMS, INSTRUCTIONS

Chapter 1	
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	

2 THESSALONIANS AT A GLANCE

Book Theme:

Chapter Themes

Author:

1

Key Words:

2

Purpose:

3

**Historical
Setting:**

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.

ABOUT PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Precept Ministries International is a ministry raised up by God for the sole purpose of establishing people in God's Word as that which produces reverence for Him. It serves as an arm of the church without respect to denomination. God has led Precept Ministries International to reach across denominational lines without in any way compromising the truths of God's inerrant Word. Believing that the Word has been verbally inspired and given to man as all that is necessary for a man of God to be mature and thoroughly equipped for every good work of life, this ministry does not seek to impose upon others its personal doctrines, but rather to direct them to the Master Himself, who is able by His Spirit to lead and to guide them into all truth through systematic study of His Word.

The teaching emphasis of Precept Ministries International is manifested in several different ways. In order to minister to people in all walks of life, Precept Ministries International has made a variety of teaching helps available, from conferences and audio or video teaching tapes to intensive Training Workshops designed to ground those attending in inductive Bible study. Conferences and weekly Precept Bible studies are held at Precept Ministries International's headquarters and conference center, strategically located on a beautiful 32-acre, multi-building complex in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Jack Arthur and his wife, Kay, founded Precept Ministries in 1970. Kay Arthur is the creator and co-author of the Precept Upon Precept and In & Out Bible Study Series. From their years of diligent study and teaching experience, Kay and the staff have developed these unique, inductive courses.

Should you desire further information about its various teaching ministries or regarding its intensive training programs, please contact **Precept Ministries International, 800-763-8280, www.precept.org**. A doctrinal statement is available upon request.