

2 THESSALONIANS - INTRODUCTION

2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-2

Topics:

Author, Audience, Date Written, Setting, Occasion/Purpose for Writing, Message and Themes, Persecution, Christ's Return, Great Rebellion, and Persistence

Open It Questions

- A. What do you do to make sure that important things you say are communicated exactly as you say them?

- B. What should believers be doing until Jesus returns for his church?

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1. Who is the author of 2 Thessalonians? (1:1)

2. To whom was this letter addressed? (2 Thessalonians 1:1)

3. How did Paul address the believers in this city? (1:1)

4. When was 2 Thessalonians written? (See Paul's Letters and Missionary Journeys Chart)

5. Where was the City of Thessalonica located in relation to the City of Corinth? (See Map Showing Thessalonica)

6. What were some of the features of the City of Thessalonica?

7. Why was 2 Thessalonians written? (2 Thessalonians Chapter 1)

8. What were the main messages that Paul tried to convey to the Thessalonians in this second letter?
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This second letter to the Thessalonians begins with Paul's trademark personal greeting and a statement of thanksgiving for their faith (1:1-3). He mentions their perseverance in spite of their persecution and trials (1:4) and uses this situation to broach the subject of Christ's return. At that time, Christ will vindicate the righteous who endure and will punish the wicked (1:5-12).

Paul then directly answers the misunderstanding concerning the timing of the events of the end times. He tells them not to listen to rumors and reports that the day of the Lord has already begun (2:1-2), because a number of events must occur before Christ returns (2:3-12). Meanwhile, they should stand firm for Christ's truth (2:13-15), receive God's encouragement and hope (2:16-17), pray for strength and for the spread of the Lord's message (3:1-5), and warn those who are unruly, meaning idle (3:6-15). Paul ends with personal greetings and a benediction (3:16-18).

The main themes in the second letter to the Thessalonians are:
Persecution, Christ's Return, Great Rebellion, and Persistence.

Persecution (1:4-12; 3:1-5). Knowing that believers were being persecuted for their faith, Paul encouraged the church to persevere despite their troubles and trials. He affirmed that God would bring victory to his faithful followers and judge those who persecute them.

9. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically respond to *Persecution* today.

Christ's Return (1:5-7; 2:1-12). Because Paul had written that Christ could return at any moment, some of the Thessalonian believers had stopped working in order to wait for him. Certainly, believers should be prepared for the Second Coming. But this preparation includes faithfully fulfilling the work to which God has called them, living upright and moral lives, and using their gifts and talents for God's glory.

10. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically prepare for *Christ's Return* today?

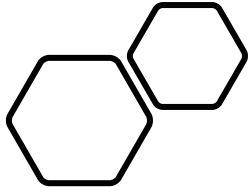
Great Rebellion (2:3-12). Before Christ's return, a great rebellion against God will be led by the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist). God will remove all the restraints on evil before he brings judgment on the rebels. The Antichrist will attempt to deceive many.

11. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically prepare to personally avoid, and to help fellow believers avoid, getting caught up in a *Great Rebellion* in our lifetime?

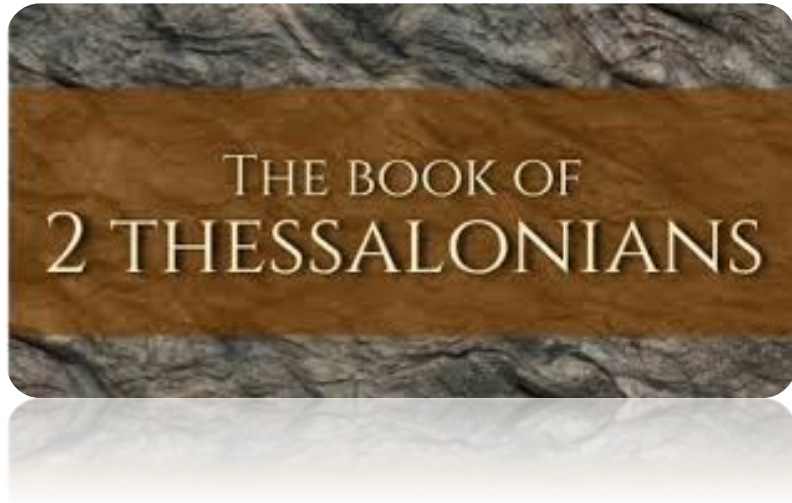
Persistence (1:4, 11-12; 2:13-17; 3:1-15). Members of the Thessalonian church had quit working and had become disorderly and disobedient. Paul chastised them for their idleness. He called them to show courage and true Christian conduct. He also challenged them to pray for courage and for each other and to stand firm in their faith.

12. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically respond with *Persistence* in today's world to avoid developing a halfhearted or careless attitude about Christianity like the some of the Thessalonians?

[Source: Life Application New Testament Commentary and Adult LessonMaker]



New Hope Missionary Baptist Church of Southfield, Michigan



Welcome to Bible Study

Guest Facilitators

Robbin Cooper, Sunday School Supt.
Jacqueline Bray, Instructor
Jonathan Clark, Instructor
Kendall Taylor, Instructor
Vineta Mitchell, Instructor
Chaplain Gloria Vinson, Instructor

Facilitators

Rev. Rodney Kemp
Rev. Valerie Crump
Rev. Jacqueline Albert
Alicia Martin, Minister-in-Training
Dean Donna Wilson

PRAYER



THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

- ☐ Holy Bible
- ☐ 2 Thessalonians Teaching Schedule
- ☐ Participant Questionnaire/Worksheet
- ☐ A Chronology of Paul's Writings
- ☐ Thessalonians Location Map
- ☐ Outline of the Second Letter to the Thessalonians

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

Topics

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

Topics

- Author
- Audience
- Date Written
- Setting
- Occasion/Purpose
- Message
- Themes
- Persecution
- Christ’s Return
- Great Rebellion
- Persistence

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

Open It Questions

“Introduction and Background”

Open It Questions

- A. What do you do to make sure that important things you say are communicated exactly as you say them?

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**Open It
Questions**

B. What should believers be doing until Jesus returns for his church?

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

INTRODUCTION

“Introduction and Background”

INTRODUCTION

Communication can be tricky. What is heard and repeated is not always what was said in the first place. Evidently, that’s what happened in Thessalonica. Paul had written his warm and personal first letter to teach, encourage, and strengthen the believers there. Perhaps the most powerful message of Paul’s letter was his teaching about the Second Coming.

“Introduction and Background”

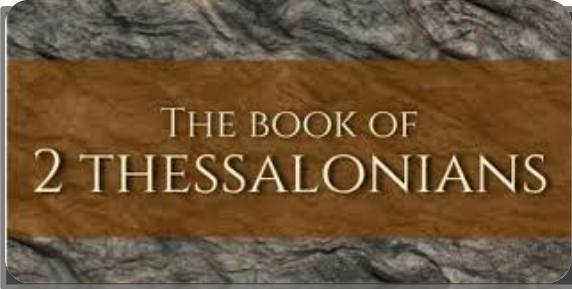
INTRODUCTION

Paul wanted to comfort those who had lost loved ones and to give all of them hope. Jesus would soon return, and they should be ready. Many of the Thessalonians, however, had heard the wrong message. Or they may have received false information from outsiders who, because of ignorance or selfish motives, had twisted the truth.

“Introduction and Background”

INTRODUCTION

Thinking Paul was stating that Jesus would come at any minute, some of them may have stopped working and started watching. The increased persecution of the church made this interpretation of Paul's words more plausible. *Surely this is the Day of the Lord*, many must have thought.

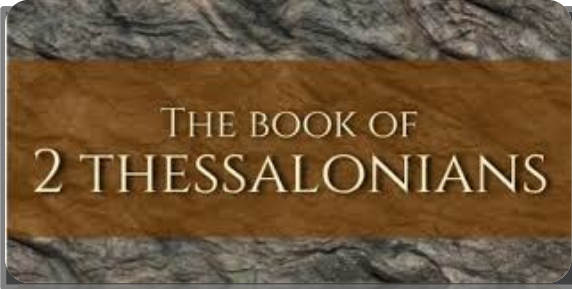
The image shows a book cover for 'The Book of 2 Thessalonians'. The cover has a dark, textured background with a central horizontal band of a lighter, brownish-gold color. The title is written in a serif font, with 'THE BOOK OF' in smaller letters above '2 THESSALONIANS'.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

INTRODUCTION

Upon learning of this miscommunication and misunderstanding, Paul wrote quickly, instructing further about the Second Coming and the Day of the Lord.

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THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

INTRODUCTION

As you read 2 Thessalonians, think of how the first-century believers in that Greek city must have received Paul’s message and how they probably changed their behavior. And consider what you should do to be ready for Christ’s return—it’s closer now than ever before.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

SCRIPTURE
2 Thessalonians 1:1-2
(NLT)

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

SCRIPTURE
2 Thessalonians 1:1-2
(NLT)

This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Author

“Introduction and Background”

1. Who is the author of 2 Thessalonians? (1:1)

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Author

This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1 NLT).

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Audience

“Introduction and Background”

2. To whom was this letter addressed? (1:1)

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Audience

This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1 NLT).

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Audience

Second Thessalonians was written to the same group of people to whom 1 Thessalonians was written: the believers in Thessalonica. Because of the similarities between the two letters, some critical scholars have asserted that each letter was sent to a distinct group in the Thessalonian church.

“Introduction and Background”

3. How did Paul address the believers in this city? (1:1)

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Audience

This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1 NLT).

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Audience

Paul addressed the Thessalonians as belonging to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very special relationship because it acknowledges the Thessalonian believers as part of the family of God with access to numerous blessings and protections.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Date Written

THE BOOK OF
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“Introduction and Background”

4. When was 2 Thessalonians written? (See Paul’s Letters and Missionary Journeys Chart)

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT *Date Written*

2 Thessalonians was written from Corinth around A.D. 51, a few months after writing 1 Thessalonians. The content of 2 Thessalonians verifies Corinth as the location.

PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia	
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia			
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch	
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15		
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
53-54	Antioch			
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23		
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years	
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28		
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Setting – The City

5. **Where was the City of Thessalonica located in relation to the City of Corinth?**

(See Map Showing Thessalonica and Corinth)

THE BOOK OF
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“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Setting – The City



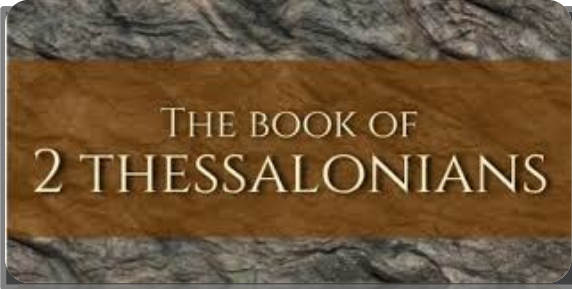
“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Setting – The City

6. What were some of the features of the City of Thessalonica?

Thessalonica was the capital and largest city (about 200,000 population) of the Roman province of Macedonia. The most important Roman highway (the Egnatian Way)—extending from Rome all the way to the Orient—went through Thessalonica. This highway, along with the city's thriving seaport, made Thessalonica one of the wealthiest and most flourishing trade centers in the Roman Empire.



THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Setting – The City

Recognized as a free city, Thessalonica was allowed self-rule and was exempt from most of the restrictions placed by Rome on other cities in the empire. With its international flavor, however, came many pagan religions and cultural influences that challenged the faith of the young Christians there.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

*Occasion and Purpose
for Writing*

“Introduction and Background”

7. Why was 2 Thessalonians written?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Occasion and Purpose for Writing

This letter was written primarily to clear up confusion about the Second Coming of Christ.

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Occasion and Purpose for Writing

After sending his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul received additional news about the believers there. They were enduring intense persecution and great hardship, but despite their troubles, they were clinging to the faith. Some, however, were claiming that Jesus had already returned. These believers may have misunderstood Paul’s statement that Christ’s return would be as unexpected as a thief coming in the middle of the night ([1 Thessalonians 5:1-3](#)).

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Occasion and Purpose for Writing

Or perhaps they had received another letter, claiming to be from Paul, that simply declared that Christ had already returned (2:2-3). That rumor, along with persecution, was disrupting and weakening the young church. Thinking they were in the final days, some believers were refusing to work (compare 1 Thessalonians 5:14 with 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12).

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Occasion and Purpose for Writing

Paul knew that he had to write a second letter to dispel the rumors and to guide the young church. In summary, this letter reveals the heart of a concerned pastor. Paul didn't want any false teaching to distract his new converts from the Christian faith. They had already suffered too much for Christ to be sidetracked by idle gossip.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Message

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Message

- Thanksgiving for their faith (1:1-3)
- Commends perseverance in face of persecution and trials (1:4)
- Christ will vindicate the righteous (1:5-12)
- To correct misunderstandings about end times (2:1-12)
- Encouragement and Hope (2:16-17)
- Warn those who live unruly and idle lives (3:6-15)

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Themes

“Introduction and Background”

The main themes in the book of 2 Thessalonians include:

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

- Persecution (1:4-12; 3:1-5)
- Christ's Return (1:5-7; 2:1-12)
- Great Rebellion (2:3-12)
- Persistence (1:4, 11-12; 2:13-17; 3:1-15)

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

Persecution

Knowing that believers were being persecuted for their faith, Paul encouraged the church to persevere despite their troubles and trials. He affirmed that God would bring victory to his faithful followers and judge those who persecute them.

“Introduction and Background”

9. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically respond to Persecution today.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

Importance for today. Christians are still being persecuted because of their strong faith in Christ.

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

Christ's Return

Because Paul had written that Christ could return at any moment, some of the Thessalonian believers had stopped working in order to wait for him. Certainly, believers should be prepared for the Second Coming. But this preparation includes faithfully fulfilling the work to which God has called them, living upright and moral lives, and using their gifts and talents for God's glory.

“Introduction and Background”

10. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically prepare for *Christ's Return* today?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

Importance for today. Christ will return and bring total victory to all who trust in him.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

Great Rebellion

Before Christ’s return, a great rebellion against God will be led by the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist). God will remove all the restraints on evil before he brings judgment on the rebels. The Antichrist will attempt to deceive many.

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

11. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically prepare to personally avoid, and to help fellow believers avoid, getting caught up in a *Great Rebellion* in our lifetime?

Importance for today. We should not be afraid when we see evil increase. God is in control, no matter how evil the world becomes.

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Themes

Persistence

Members of the Thessalonian church had quit working and had become disorderly and disobedient. Paul chastised them for their idleness. He called them to show courage and true Christian conduct. He also challenged them to pray for courage and for each other and to stand firm in their faith.

“Introduction and Background”

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT *Themes*

12. What is the importance of knowing how to biblically respond with *Persistence* in today's world to avoid developing a halfhearted or careless attitude about Christianity like the Thessalonians?

Importance for today. Believers must never get so tired of doing right that they stop doing it.

THE BOOK OF
2 THESSALONIANS

“Introduction and Background”

**BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Outline

“Introduction and Background”

2 THESSALONIANS ***OUTLINE***

- I. Introduction, thanksgiving, and prayer (1:1-12)
- II. The day of the Lord (2:1-12)
- III. How to live while awaiting the Lord's return (2:13-3:15)
 - A. Election calls for perseverance (2:13-17)
 - B. Pray for the leadership (3:1-5)
 - C. Continue working while awaiting Christ's return (3:6-15)
- IV. Closing greetings (3:16-18)



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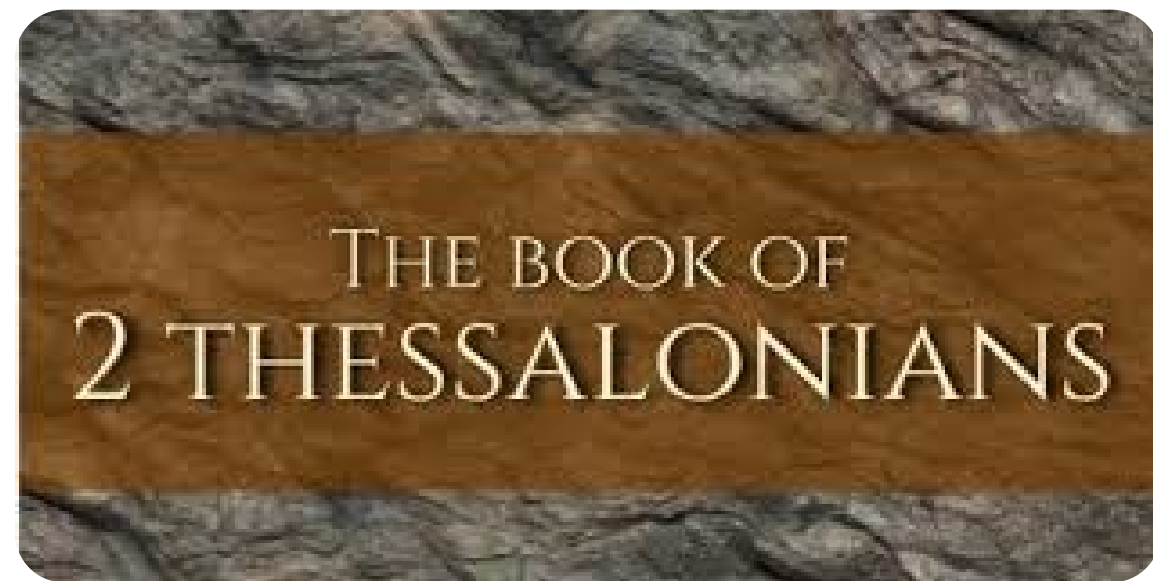
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Next Week's Lesson:

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

“Paul’s Thanksgiving and Prayer”

PRAYER



2 THESSALONIANS

MAP OF THESSALONICA



Thessalonica was the capital and largest city (about 200,000 population) of the Roman province of Macedonia. The most important Roman highway (the Egnatian Way)—extending from Rome all the way to the Orient—went through Thessalonica. This highway, along with the city's thriving seaport, made Thessalonica one of the wealthiest and most flourishing trade centers in the Roman Empire. Recognized as a free city, Thessalonica was allowed self-rule and was exempt from most of the restrictions placed by Rome on other cities in the empire. With its international flavor, however, came many pagan religions and cultural influences that challenged the faith of the young Christians there.

2 Thessalonians

Outline

- I. Introduction, thanksgiving, and prayer (1:1-12)
- II. The day of the Lord (2:1-12)
- III. How to live while awaiting the Lord's return (2:13-3:15)
 - A. Election calls for perseverance (2:13-17)
 - B. Pray for the leadership (3:1-5)
 - C. Continue working while awaiting Christ's return (3:6-15)
- IV. Closing greetings (3:16-18)

LESSONmaker Outlines.

PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
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