

English: Unlocked Literal Bible for 2 Thessalonians

Formatted for Translators

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Bible Text: The English Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB)

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Notes: English ULB Translation Notes

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Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Thessalonians

1. Greetings and thanksgiving (1:1-3)
2. Christians suffering from persecution
 - They are worthy of the kingdom of God and of his promise of relief from trials (1:4-7)
 - God will judge those who persecute Christians (1:8-12)
3. Some believers' misunderstanding about the second coming of Christ
 - Christ's return has not yet happened (2:1-2)
 - Instruction about the events that will precede the return of Christ (2:3-12)
4. Paul's confidence that God will save the Thessalonian Christians
 - His call to "stand firm" (2:13-15)
 - His prayer that God will comfort them (2:16-17)
5. Paul requests that the Thessalonian believers pray for him (3:1-5)
6. Paul give commands about idle believers (3:6-15)
7. Closing (3:16-17)

Who wrote 2 Thessalonians?

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul wrote this letter while staying in the city of Corinth.

What is the Book of 2 Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica. He encouraged the believers because they were being persecuted. He told them to continue living in a way that pleased God. And he wanted to teach them again about Christ's return.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Thessalonians" or "Second Thessalonians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Thessalonica," or "The Second Letter to the Christians in Thessalonica."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "second coming" of Jesus?

Paul wrote much in this letter about Jesus's eventual return to Earth. When Jesus returns, he will judge all mankind. He will also rule over creation. And he will cause there to be peace everywhere. Paul also explained that a "man of lawlessness" will come before Christ's return. This person will obey Satan and cause many people to oppose God. But Jesus will destroy this person when he returns.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Thessalonians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

- "and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2:3). The ULB and most modern translations read this way. Older versions have, "and the man of sin is revealed."
- "For God chose you as the firstfruits for salvation" (2:13) The ULB and some other translations read this way. Other versions have, "For God chose you from the first for salvation."

2 Thessalonians

1 ¹Paul, 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 our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We should always give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is appropriate, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love each of you has for one another increases.⁴So we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions, and in the tribulations that you are enduring.⁵This is evidence of God's righteous judgment, so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering.

⁶For indeed, it is righteous for God to return affliction to those who afflict you,⁷and relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.¹⁰He will do this when he comes on that day to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at by all those who believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

¹¹Because of this we also pray continually for you, that our God may consider you worthy of your calling and with his power he may fulfill every good purpose and every work of faith.¹²We pray this so 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.

2 Thessalonians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 1-2 formally introduce this letter. Letters in the ancient Near East commonly had introductions of this type.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in verses 4-5: "We talk about your patience and faith in all your persecutions. We talk about the afflictions that you endure. This is a sign of God's righteous judgment." People would not normally think that believing in God while being persecuted is a sign of God's righteous judgment. But in verses 5-10, Paul explains how God will reward those who believe in him and how he will judge those who afflict them. ([2 Thessalonians 1:4-5](#))

Links:

- [2 Thessalonians 1:1 Notes](#)
- [2 Thessalonians intro\]\(../front/intro.md\) | \[\[>>\]\(#\)](#)

2 Thessalonians 1:1	brothers
General Information:	Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
Paul is the author of this letter, but he includes Silvanus and Timothy as senders of the letter. He begins by greeting the church at Thessalonica. The words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.	the love each of you has for one another increases
Silvanus	"you sincerely love one another"
This is the Latin form of "Silas." He is the same person listed in the book of Acts as Paul's fellow traveler.	one another
2 Thessalonians 1:2	Here "one another" means fellow Christians.
Grace to you	2 Thessalonians 1:4
Paul commonly uses this greeting in his letters.	we ourselves
2 Thessalonians 1:3	Here "ourselves" is used to emphasize Paul's boasting.
General Information:	2 Thessalonians 1:5
Paul gives thanks for the believers in Thessalonica.	you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God
We should always give thanks to God	This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider you worthy to be part of his kingdom"
Paul uses "always" as a generalization meaning "often" or "regularly. The sentence emphasizes the greatness of what God is doing in the lives of the Thessalonian believers. Alternate translation: "We should often give thanks to God"	2 Thessalonians 1:6
	Connecting Statement:
	As Paul continues, he talks about God being just.
	it is righteous for God
	"God is right" or "God is just"

for God to return affliction to those who afflict you

Here "to return" is a metaphor that means to cause someone to experience the same thing they did to someone else. Alternate translation: "for God to afflict those who afflict you"

2 Thessalonians 1:7

and relief to you

These words continue the description of what God is right "to return" to people

relief to you

"for God to provide relief to you"

2 Thessalonians 1:8

in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who

"punishing with blazing fire those who do not know God and those who"

2 Thessalonians 1:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Thessalonians 1:10

when he comes on that day

Here "that day" is the day when Jesus will return to the world.

to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at by all those who believed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that his holy people will glorify him and all those

who believed will marvel at him" or "so that his people will glorify him and all those who believed will stand in awe of him"

2 Thessalonians 1:11

we also pray continually for you

Paul is emphasizing how often he prays for them. Alternate translation: "we also pray regularly for you" or "we continue to pray for you"

calling

Here "calling" refers to God appointing or choosing people to be his children and servants and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus.

fulfill every good purpose

"make you able to do good in every way that you desire"

2 Thessalonians 1:12

that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that you may glorify the name of our Lord Jesus"

and you in him

You may need to make explicit who will glorify the readers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and Jesus will glorify you"

according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

"because God and the Lord Jesus Christ have given grace to you"

2 ¹Now about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to be with him, we earnestly appeal to you, brothers,²that you not be easily disturbed or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message, or by a letter that seems to be coming from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has already come.

³Let no one deceive you in any way. For it will not come until after the falling away comes and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. ⁴¹This is he who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped. As a result, he sits in the temple of God and exhibits himself as God.

⁵Do you not remember that when I was with you I told you these things?⁶Now you know what restrains him, so that he will be revealed only at the right time.⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only there is someone who restrains him now until he is taken out of the way.

⁸Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring him to nothing by the revelation of his coming.⁹The coming of the lawless one will be due to the work of Satan with all power, signs, and false wonders,¹⁰and with every kind of evil that deceives those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

¹¹For this reason God is sending them a powerful delusion so that they will believe a lie¹²and so that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but instead took pleasure in unrighteousness.

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved through the sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴²He called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵So then, brothers, stand firm and hold tightly to the traditions that you were taught, whether by word or by our letter.

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

¹Some important and ancient Greek copies read, and the man of sin is revealed .

²Some important and ancient Greek copies read, For God chose you from the first for salvation .

2 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Being gathered together to be with him"

This passage refers to a time when Jesus calls to himself those who have believed in him. Scholars differ on whether or not this refers to Christ's final glorious return. (See: believe)

Man of lawlessness

This is the same as "son of destruction" and "lawless one" in this chapter. Paul associates him with Satan, who is actively working in the world. (See: antichrist)

Sits in the temple of God

Paul could be referring to the Jerusalem temple that the Romans destroyed several years after he wrote this letter. Or he could be referring to a future physical temple, or to the church as the spiritual temple of God.

Links:

- [2 Thessalonians 2:1 Notes](#)

2 Thessalonians 2:1

General Information:

Paul exhorts believers not to be deceived about the day Jesus will come back.

Now

The word "Now" marks a change of topic in Paul's instructions.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

2 Thessalonians 2:2

that you not be easily disturbed or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that no spirit or person easily disturb or trouble you, either by a message"

by a message, or by a letter that seems to be coming from us

"by spoken word or by written letter that pretends to be coming from us"

to the effect that

"saying that"

the day of the Lord

This refers to the time when Jesus will come back to the earth for all believers.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

General Information:

Paul teaches about the man of lawlessness.

it will not come

"the day of the Lord will not come"

the falling away

This refers to a future time when many people will turn away from God.

the man of lawlessness is revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals the man of lawlessness"

the son of destruction

Paul speaks of destruction as a person who bore a son whose goal is to totally destroy everything. Alternate translation: "the one who destroys everything he can"

2 Thessalonians 2:4

all that is called God or that is worshiped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everything that people consider to be God or everything that people worship"

exhibits himself as God

"shows himself as God"

2 Thessalonians 2:5

Do you not remember ... these things?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind them of his teaching when he was with them previously. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am sure you remember ... these things."

these things

This refers to the return of Jesus, the day of the Lord, and the man of lawlessness.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

what restrains him

"what holds him back" or "what keeps him from doing what he wants to do"

he will be revealed only at the right time

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal the man of lawlessness when the time is right"

2 Thessalonians 2:7

mystery of lawlessness

This refers to a sacred secret that only God knows.

who restrains him

To restrain someone is to hold him back or to keep him from doing what he wants to do.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Then the lawless one will be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then God will allow the lawless one to show himself"

with the breath of his mouth

Here "breath" represents the power of God. Alternate translation: "by the power of his spoken word"

bring him to nothing by the revelation of his coming

When Jesus returns to earth and shows himself, he will defeat the lawless one.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

with all power, signs, and false wonders

"with all kinds of power, signs, and false wonders"

2 Thessalonians 2:10

with every kind of evil that deceives those who are perishing

This man who is given power by Satan will deceive everyone who does not believe in Jesus.

who are perishing

Here "perishing" has the concept of everlasting or eternal destruction.

they refused to love the truth

This metaphor speaks of these people as if someone had offered them a physical object, like good food, and they had refused to accept or receive it. The abstract noun "love" can be translated as a verb.

2 Thessalonians 2:11

For this reason

"Because the people do not love the truth"

God is sending them a powerful delusion so that they will believe a lie

The powerful delusion is a metonym for the person who will delude the people. Alternate translation: "God is sending the man of lawlessness to delude them"

a powerful delusion

a lie that sounds so true that many people believe it

2 Thessalonians 2:12

they all may be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will judge all of them"

who did not believe the truth but instead took pleasure in unrighteousness

"who took pleasure in unrighteousness because they did not believe the truth" or "who enjoyed doing evil deeds because they did not believe the truth"

2 Thessalonians 2:13

General Information:

Paul gives thanks to God for the believers and encourages them.

Connecting Statement:

Paul now changes topics.

But

Paul uses this word here to mark a change in topic.

we should always give thanks

The word "always" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "we should continually give thanks"

we should

Here "we" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

brothers loved by the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the Lord loves you, brothers"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

as the firstfruits to be saved through the sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth

Being among the first people to be saved is spoken of as if the Thessalonian believers were "firstfruits." This can also be stated to remove the abstract nouns "salvation," "sanctification," "belief," and "truth." Alternate translation: "to be among the first people who believe what is true, whom God has saved and set apart for himself by his Spirit"

2 Thessalonians 2:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

So then, brothers, stand firm

Paul exhorts the believers to hold fast to their faith in Jesus.

hold tightly to the traditions

Here "traditions" refers to the truths of Christ that Paul and the other apostles taught. Paul speaks of them as if his readers could hold on to them with their hands. Alternate translation: "remember the traditions" or "believe the truths"

you were taught

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we have taught you"

whether by word or by our letter

"By word" here is a synecdoche for "by instructions" or "by teachings." You can make clear the implicit information. Alternate translation: "whether by what we taught you in person or by what we wrote to you in a letter"

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends with a blessing from God.

Now

Paul uses this word here to mark a change in topic.

Lord Jesus Christ himself

Here "himself" gives additional emphasis to the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ."

may our Lord ... who loved us and gave us

The words "our" and "us" refer to all believers.

gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace

"caused us to have eternal comfort and good hope through grace"

eternal comfort

"comfort that never ends" or "unceasing encouragement"

good hope

Here "hope" means a "certain expectation." Alternate translation: "certainty that we will receive good things from him" or "confidence that we will good things from him"

through grace

"because of his kindness"

2 Thessalonians 2:17

comfort and strengthen your hearts in

Here "hearts" represents the seat of emotions. Alternate translation: "comfort you and strengthen you for"

every good work and word

"every good thing you do and say"

³ Now, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may rush and be glorified, as it also is with you,² and that we may be delivered from unrighteous and evil people, for not all have faith.³ But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.

⁴ We have confidence in the Lord about you, that you both do and will continue to do the things that we command.

⁵ May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ.

⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you avoid every brother who is idle and does not live according to the traditions you received from us.⁷ For you yourselves know it is proper for you to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you. ⁸ We did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but we worked night and day in labor and toil, so we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ We did this not because we have no authority, but we did this in order to be an example to you, so that you may imitate us.

¹⁰ For when we were with you, we commanded you, "The one who is unwilling to labor must not eat."¹¹ For we hear that some among you are idle, not busy at labor, but busybodies.¹² Now such ones we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they should labor with quietness and eat their own bread.

¹³ But you, brothers, do not become tired of doing well.¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this letter, take note of him and have no association with him, so that he may be ashamed.¹⁵ Yet do not consider him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.¹⁷ I, Paul, write this with my own hand, which is the mark on every letter I write.¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

2 Thessalonians 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Idle and lazy persons

In Thessalonica, there apparently was a problem with people in the church who were able to work but refused to do so.

What should you do if your brother sins?

In this chapter, Paul teaches that Christians need to live in a way that honors God. Christians should also encourage one another and hold each other accountable for what they do. The church is also responsible for encouraging believers to repent if they sin. (See: repent and sin)

Links:

- [2 Thessalonians 3:1 Notes](#)

2 Thessalonians 3:1

brothers

General Information:

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

Paul asks the believers to pray for him and his companions.

Now

Paul uses the word "now" to mark a change in topic.

that the word of the Lord may rush and be glorified, as it also is with you

Paul speaks of God's word spreading as if it were running from place to place. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that more and more people will soon hear our message about our Lord Jesus and honor it, as happened with you"

2 Thessalonians 3:2

that we may be delivered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God may save us" or "that God may rescue us"

for not all have faith

"for many people do not believe in Jesus"

2 Thessalonians 3:3

the evil one

"Satan"

2 Thessalonians 3:4

We have confidence

"We have faith" or "We trust"

2 Thessalonians 3:5

direct your hearts to

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or mind. Alternate translation: "cause you to understand"

the love of God and to the endurance of Christ

Paul speaks of God's love and Christ's endurance as if they were destinations on a path. Alternate translation: "how much God loves you and how much Christ has endured for you"

2 Thessalonians 3:6

General Information:

Paul gives the believers some final instructions about working and not being idle.

Now

Paul uses this word to mark a change in topic.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "as if our Lord Jesus Christ himself were speaking"

our Lord

Here "our" refers to all believers.

is idle

This person is not working hard, but is lazy. Alternate translation: "does not do what is right"

2 Thessalonians 3:7

to imitate us

"to act the way that my fellow workers and I act"

we were not idle

"we lived disciplined lives"

2 Thessalonians 3:8

anyone's bread

Bread here is a synecdoche for any kind of food. Alternate translation: "anyone's food"

we worked night and day

"we worked during the night and during the day." Here "night" and "day" are a merism and they mean "all the time." Alternate translation: "we worked all the time"

in labor and toil

Paul emphasizes how hard his circumstances were. The words "difficult labor" imply that Paul and his companions did work that requires great effort. The word "hardship" implies they endured pain and

suffering. Alternate translation: "in very difficult circumstances"

2 Thessalonians 3:9

We did this not because we have no authority, but we did this

Paul uses a double negative to correct a misunderstanding that his readers may have had. It can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "Even though we have authority, we did this"

2 Thessalonians 3:10

The one who is unwilling to labor must not eat

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Only the one who is willing to work should eat" or "Only people who are willing to work should eat"

2 Thessalonians 3:11

you are idle

"live a lazy life"

but busybodies

Busybodies are people who interfere in the affairs of others without being asked to help.

2 Thessalonians 3:12

with quietness

"in a quiet, peaceful, and mild manner." Paul exhorts the meddlers to stop getting involved in other people's affairs.

eat their own bread

Bread here is a synecdoche for any kind of food. See how "bread" is translated in [2 Thessalonians 3:8]

2 Thessalonians 3:13

But

Paul uses this word to contrast the lazy believers with the hardworking believers.

you, brothers

The word "you" refers to all the Thessalonian believers.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

2 Thessalonians 3:14

if anyone does not obey our word

"if anyone does not obey our instructions"

take note of him

Notice who he is. Alternate translation: "publicly identify that person"

2 Thessalonians 3:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

General Information:

Paul makes closing remarks to the believers at Thessalonica.

may the Lord of peace himself give you

You can make explicit that this is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians. Alternate translation: "I pray that the Lord of peace himself gives you"

the Lord of peace himself

Here "himself" emphasizes that the Lord will personally give peace to believers.

2 Thessalonians 3:17

I, Paul, write this with my own hand

Paul makes it clear that this letter is from him and is not a forgery.

2 Thessalonians 3:18

General Information:

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