

2 Thessalonians 2:13–17

The Day of the Lord and Believers

Study 05 · 2 Thessalonians 2
Small Group Bible Study Series

Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers ThD (SellersBibleInstitute.com; used by permission)

Editor: The Gospel Vault

① TEXT	② DEVOTIONAL	③ COMMENTARY	④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE
Foundation	Personal preparation	Teacher / Leader preparation	Group meeting
<i>Everyone</i>	<i>All group members</i>	<i>Teacher / Leader</i>	<i>Small group</i>

⑤ Application closes each study and draws from all sections above, plus FGR.docx.

① THE BIBLICAL TEXT

2 Thessalonians 2:13–17 · New King James Version (NKJV)

13 *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,*

14 *to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

15 *Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.*

16 *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,*

17 *comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

② DEVOTIONAL

Personal preparation · Drawn from the teaching and outline

“God from the beginning chose you for salvation.” — 2 Thessalonians 2:13

After a chapter about deception, lawlessness, and delusion, Paul turns with one small word: “But.” The unbelievers will face the Day of the Lord — but not you. You are brothers, beloved by the Lord. The Father chose you, the Spirit set you apart, you believed the truth, and God appointed you not to wrath but to deliverance and to share in Christ’s glory.

Because that is true, don’t sit down — stand up. Stand fast and hold on to what the apostles taught. Hear it, make sure it is the Word, review it, believe it, and share it, so that it does not slip away from your mind or your life.

And you do not stand alone. The Lord Jesus Christ and our God and Father loved us, paid everything, and gave us everlasting comfort and good hope — supplied not out of His riches, but according to them.

For Reflection

1. What changes when you read “but not you” after a description of coming judgment?
2. Which of the five steps — hear, verify, review, believe, share — do you most often skip?
3. Where do you most need God’s comfort and good hope this week?

Your hope is not in a government or a lottery ticket — it is in the Lord, and it is a good hope.

③ COMMENTARY

Teacher preparation resource · Full text organized under outline headings

PROPOSITION

In contrast to the unbelievers who will face the Day of the Lord, the believers are loved by Paul and by God, chosen by the Father, set apart by the Spirit, and joined by their own belief in the truth — appointed not to wrath but to deliverance from it and to a share in Christ's glory. Therefore they must stand fast and hold to the apostolic Word, drawing on the unlimited love, comfort, and good hope of the Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father.

Outline: The Day of the Lord and Believers — 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17. Teacher's text is merged under the outline headings; "From the outline" lines carry outline notes, and shaded Study Notes are supplemental material drawn from the FGR resource library.

Introduction: Review of the Context

I'm still trying to adjust my glasses. But — 2 Thessalonians 2, verses 13 to 17. If you remember this chapter, it started off with a big problem. These people thought they were in the Day of the Lord. And Paul had not taught them that. Paul had taught them properly that the church will not be here during the Tribulation period. If you're in the Day of the Lord, you're in the Tribulation. And that was not true.

A. Not Already in the Day of the Lord — 2:1–5

He shared with them, "You're not in the Day of the Lord." He tells them why. He gives them reasons down through the section.

B. The Day of the Lord and the Unbelievers — 2:6–12

And so last week we looked at the Day of the Lord and unbelievers. The unbelievers were going to be in that. And then he showed them the relationship between the Day of the Lord and unbelievers — that those unbelievers are going to be in it. And the Antichrist is going to come, the man of sin, and all that — the whole ball of wax that you find in the Tribulation period. That's going to be theirs.

C. The Day of the Lord and the Believers — 2:13–17

But now he says, "Now you believers." In fact, he starts off with "but." They're going to be in it — but, but, not you. "But we give thanks for you," and so forth. So in verses 13 to 17 he's going to say, "Here's what you believers are going to have." And he starts off by talking about their position.

I. Their Position — 2:13–14

That's going to be their position, then, verses 13 and 14.

A. Their Situation — 2:13a

And first of all, their situation. What is your situation? Well, two things.

1. They Are Brothers of Paul

They are beloved by Paul. Paul says, “we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren.” They are brothers with Paul. Paul shared with them as we are brothers and sisters together with each other. Paul says, “I am your brother, and you are my brother.”

And then, in contrast to the unbelievers, for which he could give no thanks — they turned him off. They said, “No way, we’re not having any part of that.” And Paul could not give thanks for them, but he gave thanks for these people, because they were faithful brothers and sisters in Christ there in Thessalonica. So they are brothers of Paul.

2. They Are Beloved by God

But they’re also “beloved by the Lord.” Of course — and this is what made them loved by Paul: because they’re beloved by God. So the reason Paul could love them was because here they are — God has reached down, touched them. They are of God. We’re all together in this same thing. So they’re loved by Paul, or brothers of Paul, and they are beloved by God. That’s their situation.

And that’s your situation, right? We are brothers of Paul, brothers of each other, and we are beloved by God. That’s a good start for what’s happening here.

B. Their Selection — 2:13b

1. The Father Chose

a. Not the Usual Word for Election

Now, it talks about their selection. He says the Father has chosen you: “because God from the beginning chose you.” Now, I love to run with that. And a lot of commentaries do. They run with it: “Oh, look, God chose you. He chose you to eternal life,” and all that. That’s a great doctrine. I love it. And I have written a couple of books on it. I love it. But not here. Sorry. I believe that’s not what he’s saying here.

But he’s saying the Father chose them — chose them “from the beginning,” and that beginning can be any beginning. Now, I take it as the beginning of the gospel there in Thessalonica. He chose them. And I say that because this word for “choose” is not the same word for “chosen before the foundation of the world” in Ephesians 1:4, as we’ll see. It means to pick, to choose. In fact, it’s used outside of the Scripture of picking fruit. This is the word to pick, to choose. So it’s not the usual word for election.

b. Its Only Other Uses — Philippians 1:22; Hebrews 11:25

And it’s found only two other places. I’d like for us to see those. The first one is Paul, Philippians 1:22, where he says, “But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from

my labor; yet what I shall choose I do not make known.” That’s my version. Paul is saying, “I don’t know what I shall choose. What shall I choose?” And that’s the same word.

And then it’s used one more time, in Hebrews 11:25. These could be the words of Paul — I don’t believe Paul wrote Hebrews, but his fingerprints are all over it. But in any case, he says in 11:25 of Hebrews: Moses, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.” Moses chose to stay with the people of God. Those are the only two uses of the word other than our text.

c. Ephesians 1:4 — The Word for Election

So the word for election, on the other hand, is in Ephesians 1:4, and it says, “He chose us” — a different word, *exelēxato*: “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” That is obviously choosing to eternal life, but that is not the case here. So, for all those reasons, I don’t see this as choosing to eternal life, but rather to escape the Tribulation. And there’s more to come on that, as we’ll see.

So I still believe in election. My previous students — some of them here — know that I hit that hard. I used to give seminars in the school — the college cafeteria — give seminars on Saturday night, and one time we stayed till two o’clock talking about it. Actually, I loved it. And I do it often during the school year. Well, I still do, but I don’t see it in this passage. That’s it. So, the Father chose.

From the outline: “Chose” is not the usual word for election. It is found only two other times in the N.T.: Philippians 1:22 (*hairēsomaī*) and Hebrews 11:25 (*helomenos > hairēsomaī*). The word for election is *eklegomai* (Ephesians 1:4, *exelēxato*). For the above reasons, I do not see this choosing as election to eternal life, but rather to escape the Tribulation.

2. The Holy Spirit Conferred — “through sanctification by the Spirit”

Then the Holy Spirit conferred. It says He chose you “through sanctification by the Spirit.” Now remember, sanctification has three parts.

a. Past — A Position

He sanctifies us, sets us apart to God, and that’s the position that we have. Believers are set apart to God the moment they believe.

b. Present — A Process

Then there’s the present sanctification, where believers are being sanctified progressively as they believe, study the Word, and are convicted by the Holy Spirit, and they become more and more like Jesus Christ. John 17:17 — Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” And Paul expresses the same thing in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18. It says, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

c. Future — A Prospect

Now, all that's the past, the present — but there's also a future prospect, and that is the completion of our sanctification. In 1 John [3:2], he says, "we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." That would be the end of it.

I believe here he's talking about the setting apart — positional sanctification — where we are chosen by God, and we are set aside by the Holy Spirit. And that's the Holy Spirit conferring what God has selected for us.

From the outline: Paul may have all three in mind, but mainly our past sanctification, which placed us into the Body of Christ, the Church.

3. The Thessalonians Concurred — "and belief in the truth"

And then the Thessalonians concurred. The Father chose, the Holy Spirit conferred, and the Thessalonians — and we — concurred. They believed in the truth. This is a contrast to verse 12. Verse 12, he says, "that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth." Remember this contrast. Verse 12: that they might be condemned who did not believe the truth. But verse 13: but you did believe. They all had pleasure in unrighteousness. You believed the truth; you received your salvation, your sanctification. All right, so that's the situation and the selection.

C. Their Salvation — 2:13c

1. Salvation Means Deliverance

Now, the salvation. This word salvation is the word which means deliverance. I wish I could get this across to everybody. The word salvation in Scripture means deliverance. And if I translated "salvation" and "save" by that word deliverance, I think we would clear up a lot of misunderstanding.

Their salvation, he says — you see the chart on that I gave you in the bulletin. Did you get a bulletin? [Some did not; bulletins were passed out.] You see in your bulletin that little chart I gave you on salvation — deliverance.

2. Its Meaning Is Determined by Context

a. Spiritual Deliverance

It means deliver, and there can be a spiritual deliverance. And we see that past, present, future: deliverance from the penalty of sin, deliverance from the power of sin, deliverance from the future presence of sin. All that is salvation.

b. Physical Deliverance

Then the second one, physical salvation. The Scripture will say "they were healed." The word is saved — delivered. They were delivered from the blindness, delivered from being lame, the maladies they had, whatever it was. But again — deliverance.

c. Deliverance from Circumstances — Matthew 14:30

So whenever you see the word salvation, you have to say, “Now, what does he mean here? What’s this context telling me?” Then there’s also deliverance from circumstances. Matthew 14:30 — Peter was walking on the water, doing fine. He said, “Lord, bid me come to You.” He said, “Okay, come on.” So he’s walking on the water. And he looked around and he said, “I’m walking on water!” And then he began to sink, because he started looking at the waves around him. He started to sink. He had a three-word prayer. He didn’t say, “O Lord, Thou that inhabitest all the earth.” He was in a hurry: “Lord, save me!” Save? I thought Peter was already saved. No. See — circumstances.

So you have to take the context of the use of the word save — deliver, which is translated deliver — and then see which one of those deliverances it is.

d. An Assignment — Matthew 24:13

I gave you a little bit of an assignment here. See it on that sheet? I gave you four or five scriptures that you have. Check it out. Look at that. Look at the context and see what you think that means.

You know, my background is a holiness background. And they used to love this one. Here it is, in Matthew 24 [24:13]: the believer must endure to the end — “he who endures to the end shall be saved.” And boy, they rang the changes on that one. And they say, “Oh, you’re going to lose your salvation, because you’ve got to endure to the end. If you don’t endure — that means you’ve got to keep coming to church, keep paying your tithes; you don’t smoke, drink — don’t do any of that, and you’ll keep your salvation. If you endure to the end, you’ll keep your salvation; otherwise, you will lose it.” And they use that scripture. You take a look at it and see what you think. See which one that fits.

And if you have any questions, come by and see me, or ask me. Call me on the phone — you’ve got my number on the bulletin. What I’m saying is that you have to determine which it is. So the meaning of the word, then, could be, in context, a lot of different things.

Study Note — “Salvation from What?” Matthew 24:13 in Context

Free Grace writers insist, as the teacher does, that *sōtēria* and *sōzō* must be read by context, because in Scripture they describe deliverance from many things — sin’s penalty, disease, drowning, enemies, and divine wrath. Matthew 24:13 sits in the Olivet Discourse, a description of the Tribulation. In that setting, “he who endures to the end shall be saved” most naturally describes the physical deliverance of those who survive the Tribulation and enter the kingdom alive — not a condition for keeping eternal life. Eternal life, by contrast, is given at the moment of faith and “shall not come into judgment” (John 5:24).

Reading “saved” as “kept from losing eternal life” in every verse is what produced the fear the teacher grew up with. Asking “saved from what?” in each passage removes that fear without weakening the call to faithfulness.

Sources (FGR): Robert N. Wilkin, *Salvation from What? A Biblical Study* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society), free

3. Salvation in This Context — Deliverance from the Wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9)

So he says — that word doesn't appear anywhere else in this epistle. Oh, where's my context? It's not even in this epistle except there. Well, it's in 1 Thessalonians 5:9. Remember, they had 1 Thessalonians before they got 2 Thessalonians, and Paul is explaining to them some of the misconceptions they have. He's trying to show them what all these things mean. So in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 he says this: "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain" — deliverance — "through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, there we pointed out to you that the wrath is the wrath of the Tribulation, and the salvation, then, is the deliverance from that wrath — deliverance from that Tribulation. Well, suppose he's using the same word, and he's trying to help them, trying to clear up something, clarify their thinking. If he uses that word in some other kind of meaning, that would be surprising to me. So I say he's not adding to the confusion; he's explaining it. He is saying, then — are you going to be delivered? Your salvation is your deliverance from the Tribulation period — that deliverance.

From the outline: Paul's purpose in the second epistle is to clarify some of their misunderstandings about the first epistle. To use this crucial word with another meaning (especially when he is writing about the same subject) would only add to the confusion.

D. Their Glorification — 2:14

1. The Appeal of the Gospel — 2:14a

That's the situation, their selection, their salvation. Their glorification — he says glorification has an appeal of the gospel: "to which He called you by our gospel." That's how the gospel appealed to them to believe on Jesus. And they did it. And their being in the believing group, then, is a direct result of believing Paul's gospel, when Paul preached it, and his partners. They did it at the beginning of the ministry. So when the Lord called them at the beginning, they believed, and they received this salvation — this right to be delivered from that Tribulation period. And you have the same salvation. Your salvation will keep you from that period of the Tribulation, with a pretribulational Rapture. Now, that's the appeal of the gospel. That gospel got them to this place.

2. The Awarding of the Glory — 2:14b

Now, the awarding of the glory. He says, "for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, how do we obtain the glory of Jesus? Well, not only will they escape the Tribulation — where will they be during the Tribulation? They'll be with the Lord.

- They will obtain glory, sharing with the Lord.

- They'll be like Him who is the glory.
- They will be with Him in glory, in heaven.
- And they will share in His glorious kingdom.

All of that — all that glory — is theirs because of this salvation, this deliverance that they have, indicating that they'll be with the Lord. Now, the extent of that glory — in the kingdom, and with the Lord, serving the Lord in the eternal state — the extent of that will be determined by how they live and serve here, after their salvation. So all of that is — he's saying the glory, they'll be sharing the glory. But we know that that's going to be determined by how we serve the Lord. So that is their position — their position, ready to escape that Tribulation period.

II. Their Practice — 2:15–17

But now their practice, verses 15 to 17. He says, "Therefore, brethren." See, that's how Paul writes — and the Scriptures are like that. He gives them a great theological precept, and he says, now, therefore, because of that — because that's true for you — don't sit down. Stand up.

A. Our Responsibility — 2:15

1. Stand Fast

They have a responsibility — verse 15: "stand fast." Don't be wishy-washy. Don't be blown about by every wind of doctrine. They were in constant tribulation, trials, and that's why they felt they were in the Tribulation to begin with. And they were afraid of this whole thing. Paul was afraid for them: if they don't stand up and stand fast, they're going to be in all kinds of trouble. So Paul points out that their problem stems from their not holding the truths that he taught them, and the truths that he wrote to them — First Thessalonians. And we need to:

a. Hear It in the First Place

Hear the Word. You have to hear it first. Hear what is being said — whether it's in Sunday school class, whether you're reading the Word, whether you're listening to a radio or TV program, hear what it says. And you have to hear it. If you sit there daydreaming — "Whoa, I wonder where that restaurant is, anyway" — oh, no. Hear it. Hear the Word.

b. Make Sure That It Is the Word of God

And then make sure that it is the Word. When I say something here, when Ray or Jim says something there or here, they ought to be able to show you why. They'll show you why they say what they say, and they'll show it by the Word. And if that doesn't help you, you come to them — any of us — and you say, "Where did you get that? How did you get that? Where is that?" We need to show you. Make sure it is the Word.

c. Review It

And then review it in your mind. Pick it through. Get the tape. Do whatever you need to do, but make sure you get it in your head.

d. Believe It

And then believe it. Believe it. If you believe it, you'll do it.

e. Share It

Then what do you do? You share it. Share it. You will understand it much better when you help somebody else with it. You say — tell a neighbor, tell a friend, talk to each other: "Here's what we said. Here's what that means." Sharing. And then, when you share it, you'll have it. That's what I'm saying. That's what they didn't do. They got all mixed up.

See, otherwise the truth is going to slip away. And it'll slip away from your mind; slip away from your lifestyle. Now he says, don't do that. Make that a part of your mind, a part of your thinking, and make it part of your lifestyle. And when you do that, then you'll be standing for the truth.

2. Hold On to the Word — "the traditions which you were taught"

And then he says, "hold" — hold fast to the Word. Hold fast to the traditions which you were taught — which Paul taught them while he was there with them. And so he's talking about not traditions like the church traditions — that are papal bulls and stuff like that, not that — but not even Southern Baptist traditions, not necessarily, but the traditions that Paul had taught. That's what he's talking about. And they don't hold on to those traditions. What he taught in person and what he taught in writing — hang on to that.

a. The Spoken Word — "whether by word"

And then it includes the spoken word. He says, "whether by word." See, the apostle Paul — what he wrote is Scripture. That's the inspired Word of God. And what he spoke to them was also the inspired Word of God. Now, there's a difference between the two, but it was the truth that he spoke. So he says, now, whether it's by word — what I taught you —

From the outline: Paul taught the inspired, apostolic word. Titus and Timothy taught what Paul had taught them.

b. The Written Word — "or our epistle"

— or the written word, in "our epistle." Now, that epistle written down — that was indeed the Word of God. That's inspired of God. They now have been saved into what we call the canon. That's spelled with one N in the middle — not the cannon that goes boom, but the canon, C-A-N-O-N — which is the collection of the inspired Word.

And, by the way, apostolicity equals canonicity. I read that somewhere. It stuck in my mind. The apostles either wrote or were in connection with the people who did write. And if it's apostolically agreed upon, then it is canon. It is God's Word.

c. The Closed Canon — John 14:26; 16:13

I believe that the canon was closed maybe as early as A.D. 70. That's one of those things you might say, "What?" As early as that, maybe — but at least by 95 or so, it was closed. And once the canon is closed, there's no further need for any revelation, and there is no revelation given of God's Word.

So — unless the Spirit forgot something and God has to give it to somebody else? No, I don't think so. Then they had it all. Because Jesus said, in the upper room — chapters 13 through 17 of the Gospel of John — Jesus was talking to the apostles, and He says, when the Holy Spirit has come, "He will teach you" — you apostles — "all things": that's the Epistles. "And bring to your remembrance" — the Gospels. "And He will tell you things to come" — the Revelation, Thessalonians, other prophetic things. All those things were given to the apostles. And when the apostles are gone, the canon is closed. That's the Scripture. That's what we are to hold on to.

Study Note — Apostolicity and the Closed Canon

The teacher's summary, "apostolicity equals canonicity," reflects the main test the early church applied: was a book written by an apostle or by someone in close association with an apostle (as Mark with Peter, Luke with Paul)? Paul himself expected his letters to be received as the Lord's commandment (1 Corinthians 14:37) and read in the churches (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). Jude 3 speaks of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Dates for the closing of the canon vary — many place the last book, Revelation, in the mid-90s A.D.; some, as the teacher allows, argue for a date before A.D. 70 — but the principle is the same: when the apostolic generation ended, the deposit of inspired revelation was complete, and the believer's task is to "hold" it.

Sources (FGR): Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999); Paul P. Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008).

B. Our Resources — 2:16–17

1. Their Source — 2:16a

And then the resources that he gives. The source of these resources is "our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father." Notice how that's spoken: the Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father. Wait a minute — isn't it always God the Father and God the Son? No, not here.

See, the Son spoke for the Father, in John 1:18: "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has" — led Him forth — "declared Him." So He spoke for the Father. But whatever the order, it's still the two of them. And it's a source, a reservoir, of meaning and power and understanding that is available to us.

Philippians 4:19 — remember? “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” God’s going to supply all your needs. Not “out of” — “according to.” According to His riches in glory, God is going to supply all your need, whatever those needs are — emotional, spiritual, physical. God supplies all you need — not out of, according to. See, if it’s just “out of,” it could be any amount; it could be ten dollars. If God supplies all your needs according to what He has — unlimited resources — He’s going to give according to them. He has all that. He’s going to give you everything you need. You’ll not lack anything. That’s it. So the source of it is that reservoir that God has given. That’s the source.

2. Their Content — 2:16b–17

a. God’s Love — 2:16b

Now the substance. What is He giving out of that source? Well — God’s love: “who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace.” “Who” — I like this. You can’t see it in English, but it’s singular. God the Son, God the Father — “who,” singular. There’s one God, and there it is, right? Spelled out. I love that. The Trinity is all over the Bible. Even in the Old Testament we see some of it. But it’s there.

And love does. He loved us — but it was They who did it. So the Father gave His Son, and the Son gave His life. And there’s no charge. My grace — no charge.

Oh, you can pay your own way, you know that. You can pay for your own sin. But the problem with that is, it’s going to be the same. You’re going to have to pay everything the same way He did. He paid for all of your sin, and if you’re going to do it on your own, you have to pay for all your sin too. And it cost Him His very life. And you will pay your very life for that, and it will take you all eternity to do that. Or you can accept that salvation that was given through Jesus Christ, and He gives it to us free. That’s God’s love.

b. God’s Life — 2:17

Then God’s life: He will “comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” See, with this love comes the comfort and hope. Because He loves us, He gives me comfort. Wherever I am, in whatever situation I find myself, I have comfort if I realize that and reckon on that.

And He also gives us hope — hope for the future. Things can go bad. Things can go terrible. We don’t have it so much here. In our great country — I’m telling you, there’s no place on earth like it, ever has been. But it can reverse. And if it does, you still have hope. And your hope is not in this government; it’s not in our Constitution. Your hope is in the Lord. And that hope is a very good hope. The word is — it’s a beneficial hope. And it assures believers of the return of their victorious Savior. That’s your hope.

Nothing here. “Oh, maybe I’ll win the lottery and I’ll be —” No, no. The lottery messes everybody’s life up. It doesn’t help at all. Don’t be thinking about that. Think about the

One who has more than all of that — the Lord Himself. And He will — we will escape. Remember the context: we will escape that Tribulation.

Conclusion

They were not in the Day of the Lord. This is winding up this whole thing now — saying, “You are not in the Day of the Lord. And you should have known that, because I taught you that.” But see, Paul was patient with them. He didn’t say, “I’m not going to talk to you anymore. You don’t listen.” No. He’s very patient: “I’ll write you another letter, and I’ll explain it more.”

And he’s as patient with them as God is with us — and as we ought to be patient with each other. We ought to be doing that, because it’s the Lord who has given us all this revelation. And He expects us to look at it — hear it, to heed it, to share it — until He comes and delivers us, as He said He was going to do.

That is our blessed hope.

④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE

For use during the group meeting · Focused on the commentary text

Greek Word Study — 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17

Grammar and parsing: Blue Letter Bible. Definitions cite only the sources that add clarity (STR · THAY · VINE), with significance in context for every word.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.13	ἀγαπάω <i>beloved</i>	G25 <i>agapaō</i> Verb — Perf. Pass. Ptc. Voc. Masc. Pl.	THAY: to love, to welcome with affection. Perfect tense: loved and continuing to be loved. Significance: Paul could love them because they are beloved by the Lord.
v.13	αἰρέομαι <i>chose</i>	G138 <i>haireomai</i> Verb — Aor. Mid. Ind. 3rd Sg.	STR: to take for oneself, prefer, choose. Elsewhere in the NT only Philippians 1:22 and Hebrews 11:25. Significance: not the usual word for election (<i>eklegomai</i> , Ephesians 1:4); the teacher sees a choosing to escape the Tribulation.
v.13	ἀρχή <i>(from the) beginning</i>	G746 <i>archē</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	STR: commencement, origin. (Some manuscripts read <i>aparchēn</i> , “as firstfruits.”) Significance: “that beginning can be any beginning” — the teacher takes it as the beginning of the gospel in Thessalonica.
v.13	ἀγιασμός <i>sanctification</i>	G38 <i>hagiasmos</i> Noun — Dat. Masc. Sg.	VINE: separation to God; also the resulting state. Significance: positional (past), progressive (present), and perfected (future) — here mainly the positional setting apart by the Spirit.
v.13	σωτηρία <i>salvation</i>	G4991 <i>sōtēria</i> Noun — Acc. Fem. Sg.	STR: rescue, safety, deliverance. Significance: meaning set by context; as in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, deliverance from the wrath of the Tribulation.
v.14	καλέω <i>called</i>	G2564 <i>kaleō</i> Verb — Aor. Act. Ind. 3rd Sg.	STR: to call, invite. Significance: God called them through “our gospel” — the message Paul and his partners preached.
v.14	περιποίησις <i>obtaining</i>	G4047 <i>peripoiēsis</i> Noun — Acc. Fem. Sg.	THAY: an obtaining, acquiring (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:9, “to obtain salvation”). Significance: believers will obtain a share in Christ's glory — the extent determined by faithful service.
v.15	στήκω <i>stand fast</i>	G4739 <i>stēkō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Imp. 2nd Pl.	STR: to be stationary, persevere. Significance: a present command — keep on standing; don't sit down, stand up.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.15	κρατέω <i>hold</i>	G2902 <i>krateō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Imp. 2nd Pl.	THAY: to hold fast, keep carefully. Significance: keep a firm grip on what was taught, so it does not slip away.
v.15	παράδοσις <i>traditions</i>	G3862 <i>paradosis</i> Noun — Acc. Fem. Pl.	VINE: a handing down; here of apostolic teaching. Significance: not church or denominational traditions, but what Paul taught by word and by letter.
v.16	παράκλησις <i>consolation</i>	G3874 <i>paraklēsis</i> Noun — Acc. Fem. Sg.	STR: comfort, encouragement. Significance: “everlasting consolation” — comfort that never runs out, in any present distress.
v.16	ἐλπίς <i>hope</i>	G1680 <i>elpis</i> Noun — Acc. Fem. Sg.	VINE: favorable and confident expectation. Significance: hope not in government or Constitution but in the return of the victorious Savior.
v.16	ἀγαθός <i>good</i>	G18 <i>agathos</i> Adjective — Acc. Fem. Sg.	THAY: good, beneficial. Significance: a “good hope” — a hope that benefits believers because it assures them of Christ’s return.
v.17	στηρίζω <i>establish</i>	G4741 <i>stērizō</i> Verb — Aor. Act. Opt. 3rd Sg.	STR: to set fast, strengthen. The optative expresses a prayer-wish. Significance: God establishes believers “in every good word and work.”

Grammar Abbreviation Key

Cases: Nom. · Gen. · Dat. · Acc. · Voc. | Number: Sg. · Pl. | Gender: Masc. · Fem. · Neut.

Verb Mood: Ind. · Imp. · Subj. · Opt. · Inf. · Ptc. | Tense: Pres. · Imperf. · Fut. · Aor. · Perf. · Plpf. | Voice: Act. · Mid. · Pass. | Person: 1st/2nd/3rd Sg./Pl.

Hebrew Word Study: not included this week. No Hebrew term is a developed point of the message.

Study Questions

Part 1 — From the Commentary

Outline Point	Key Truth
Introduction	2:1–5 — not already in the Day of the Lord; 2:6–12 — the Day of the Lord and unbelievers; 2:13–17 — the Day of the Lord and believers.
I.A Their situation — 2:13a	Brothers of Paul and beloved by God, in contrast to the unbelievers for whom Paul could give no thanks.
I.B Their selection — 2:13b	The Father chose (<i>haireomai</i> , not <i>eklegomai</i>); the Spirit conferred (sanctification: past, present, future); the Thessalonians concurred (belief in the truth).
I.C Their salvation — 2:13c	Salvation means deliverance, determined by context — here, as in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, deliverance from the wrath of the Tribulation.

Outline Point	Key Truth
I.D Their glorification — 2:14	Called by the gospel; they will obtain glory, be like Him, be with Him, and share in His kingdom — the extent by faithful service.
II.A Our responsibility — 2:15	Stand fast: hear it, make sure it is the Word, review it, believe it, share it. Hold the apostolic word, spoken and written; the canon is closed.
II.B Our resources — 2:16–17	The Son and the Father (“who,” singular) — supplying “according to” His riches; love that paid everything, comfort for today, and a good hope for tomorrow.

Part 2 — Study Questions

1. Why does the teacher not see “God ... chose you” in 2:13 as election to eternal life?

Leader answer: The verb is haireomai, not the usual word for election (eklegomai, Ephesians 1:4). Haireomai means to pick or choose — even of picking fruit — and appears elsewhere only in Philippians 1:22 and Hebrews 11:25. In this context about the Day of the Lord, he sees the choosing as a choosing to escape the Tribulation, though he still firmly believes in election.

2. What are the three parts of sanctification, and which does Paul mainly have in view?

Leader answer: Past — a position: believers are set apart to God the moment they believe. Present — a process: being transformed through the Word and the Spirit (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Future — a prospect: “we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). Here Paul mainly means the positional setting apart by the Spirit.

3. How should we determine the meaning of “salvation,” and what does it mean in 2:13?

Leader answer: Salvation means deliverance, and the context decides from what — the penalty, power, or presence of sin; physical illness; dangerous circumstances (Peter: “Lord, save me!”). In 2:13, as in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, it is deliverance from the wrath of the Tribulation; using the word differently would only add to their confusion.

4. What five things does the teacher say we must do with the Word so that it does not slip away?

Leader answer: Hear it in the first place; make sure it is the Word of God (teachers should show you from Scripture); review it; believe it — if you believe it you’ll do it; and share it — you understand it better when you help someone else with it.

5. What is significant about the order and the “who” in 2:16, and how does Philippians 4:19 illustrate God’s resources?

Leader answer: The Son is named before the Father, because the Son declared the Father (John 1:18). “Who has loved us” is singular — Father and Son, one God. God supplies “according to” His riches, not merely “out of” them; with unlimited resources, He supplies all we need. The Father gave His Son, the Son gave His life, and the gift is free.

Part 3 — Passage Summary

Verse	Phrase	Summary
2:13a	“brethren beloved by the Lord”	Brothers of Paul, loved by God — in contrast to the unbelievers.
2:13b	“God from the beginning chose you”	The Father chose, the Spirit set apart, the believers believed.
2:13c	“for salvation”	Deliverance — here from the wrath of the Day of the Lord.
2:14	“for the obtaining of the glory”	Called by the gospel to share Christ’s glory.
2:15	“stand fast and hold the traditions”	Hold the apostolic word, spoken and written.
2:16	“who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope”	The Son and Father, one God, give love, comfort, and hope by grace.
2:17	“comfort your hearts and establish you”	God’s life strengthens believers in every good word and work.

⑤ APPLICATION

Closes the study · personal & corporate

1. Read “Saved” in Context

2 Thessalonians 2:13 — “God from the beginning chose you for salvation.”

Source: ③ Commentary, I.C; Study Note “Salvation from What?”; FGR — Wilkin, Salvation from What?

Many believers have been frightened by verses like “he who endures to the end shall be saved,” read as if eternal life could be lost. The teacher’s rule frees us: salvation means deliverance, and the context tells us from what. Eternal life is given once, at the moment of faith, and cannot be lost. Other “salvations” — from danger, illness, or the wrath of the Tribulation — are just as real, but they are not the same thing.

Reflection: *Is there a verse that has made you doubt your security in Christ?*

Practical Step: Work through the handout passages this week, asking “saved from what?” for each one.

2. Five Steps to Holding the Word

2 Thessalonians 2:15 — “stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.A.1–2.

The Thessalonians had been taught the truth, but it slipped away. The remedy is a habit: hear it, make sure it is the Word, review it, believe it, and share it. Teachers should be able to show you from Scripture why they say what they say — and you should ask them.

Reflection: *What did you hear last week that has already slipped away?*

Practical Step: After this session, write down one truth, review it daily, and share it with one person before next week.

3. According to His Riches

Philippians 4:19 — “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.B.1; ② Devotional.

God does not give us a little out of His riches; He gives according to them — and His resources are unlimited. Whatever your need is — emotional, spiritual, or physical — the Lord Jesus Christ and our God and Father are a reservoir that never runs dry.

Reflection: *What need have you been treating as too big for God’s supply?*

Practical Step: Name your greatest need in prayer each morning this week, and thank God that He supplies according to His riches.

4. A Good Hope, Free of Charge

2 Thessalonians 2:16 — “who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.B.2; FGR — Bing, Simply by Grace.

The Father gave His Son, and the Son gave His life — and there is no charge. You may try to pay your own way, but it will cost the same price He paid, and it would take all eternity. Or you can receive eternal life as a free gift by faith in Jesus Christ. With that gift come everlasting comfort and a good hope that does not depend on any government, economy, or lottery.

Reflection: *Are you resting in the free gift, or still trying to pay your own way?*

Practical Step: Share the “no charge” gospel with someone this week, using John 3:16 or Ephesians 2:8–9.

End of Study · 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17