

# *2 Thessalonians*

## *Week Two*

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## 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

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### STUDY GUIDE

## 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

### Day 1

In order for the study of God's Word to take root in our hearts it must be combined with prayer and meditation and the work of the Holy Spirit. Prayer in response to thinking and pondering on God's Word helps us to ground our thoughts in God's will and ways, not our own fallen thinking. As you read through this week's portion of Scripture several times, prayerfully contemplate:

- What in these verses can you praise God for?
- What do these verses reveal you need to confess?
- What in these verses can you thank God for?
- What do these verses show that you need from God?

### Day 2- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

*Verse 5 of this chapter tells us that Paul had taught the Thessalonians on this subject previously. Consequently, in this letter Paul is giving them a quick and succinct reminder of what he had taught in much greater detail when he was with them. His purpose is to clear up the confusion, not repeat completely what had already been taught. In light of this, as Leon Morris says, "We must bear in mind the gaps in our knowledge and not be too confident in our interpretations of this notoriously difficult passage."*

Digging Deeper: The *coming of the Lord* and *being gathered together* is a reference to the rapture of the Church. Look up 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and John 14:1-3. How is this event described?

1. What was the effect of the misinformation concerning the Day of the Lord, on the Thessalonian believers?

-What kinds of behavior or thinking usually come from being shaken and alarmed?

2. How does Paul describe the Day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3?

Scholar's Note: Many of us were taught "like a thief in the night" refers to the Rapture, but we see in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 that Paul is talking about the Day of the Lord. Scholars differ on whether or not the rapture and the Day of the Lord occur as one event or as separate events and on their timing in relation to each other.

3. What were the three sources of misinformation according to verse 2?

Digging Deeper: The Thessalonians thought that they were undergoing God's judgment because of the persecution they were experiencing. Look back to 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10. What had Paul taught them that they were forgetting or not believing?

4. What we believe dictates how we think, feel and act. Therefore we need to make sure that what we believe is the truth. What kinds of wrong thinking, feeling and behavior result from believing these false statements?

False teaching: God's Word is not relevant for today.

Results:

False teaching: There are some things God won't forgive.

Results:

False teaching: If you work hard enough God will be pleased with you.

Results:

False teaching: If it makes you happy it must not be wrong.

Results:

False teaching: God is the creator but he is not personally involved in our lives.

Results:

False teaching: There is no hell.

Results:

False teaching: I can lose my salvation.

Results:

5. Whose responsibility is it to make sure you are not deceived according to verse 3a? See Acts 17:11 for help



The Thessalonian believer's emotional turmoil was the result of a deception. They were listening to false teaching that was causing them confusion and fear. This lie had robbed the Thessalonians of their peace. Paul was writing to encourage them with the truth so that they would be able to live the abundant life that was rightfully theirs as children of God.

We experience the same thing when we believe lies from Satan about ourselves and about God. We are robbed of our peace and plunged into insecurity, fear and emotional turmoil. The truth of God is the only antidote for this kind of anguish. Psalm 107:20 says that God sent out his word and healed.

Meditate on these truths from God's Word that bring healing to the wounds Satan has afflicted us with through his lies. Which of these truths do you need to start truly believing? Consider memorizing or posting one of these verses where you will see it often.

The Lie:

I am not loved.

I am not desired.

I am not significant.

I am alone.

God doesn't care.

God will not forgive you.

God's plan for me isn't good.

God disapproves of me.

The Truth:

Psalm 103:11

Colossians 3:12

Ephesians 2:10

Deuteronomy 31:8

1 Peter 5:7

Colossians 1:13-14

Romans 8:28

Colossians 1:22

### Day 3- 2 Thessalonians 2:3

6. According to verse 3, what two things have to happen before the day of the Lord comes?

Digging Deeper: It seems clear that Paul's previous teaching included circumstances he calls the rebellion, because he includes no further information about it here. Look

up the following verses that give us an idea about what Paul is talking about and summarize:

Matthew 24:10-12-

Mark 13:5-6-

2 Timothy 3:1-5-

Jude 17-18-

Scholar's Note: The word rebellion, in Greek is *apostasia*. It carries with it a religious connotation and means the deliberate abandonment of a formerly professed position. –Expositors Commentary  
“[Paul] appears to be speaking futuristically about a specific period in human history—a time that will be marked by a massive rebellion against God, perhaps even an event gaining wide attention.” –Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Mark Howell



In speaking about the apostasy of the last days, Jesus in Matthew 24:13, says that those who endure to the end will be saved. It seems frightening to consider living in a world where our religious freedom will be taken away, where we will be hated for our beliefs, where lawlessness and hatred will rule. How will we endure such a world?

Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus endured shame and the suffering of a torturous death by setting his sights on the future joy that would be his. Jesus died so that we could experience that same future joy. How glorious and rapturous must this joy be to make the sufferings of this world look like almost nothing (2 Cor. 4:17)?

Read Hebrews 12:1-2. What will we have to do in order to see that future joy as something so desirable it is worth enduring suffering for?

Spend time in reflection and prayer on these verses in Hebrews and consider:

- ❖ What weight are you lugging around that keeps you tired and in danger of not enduring?
- ❖ Is there something (sin you are clinging to) in your life you are substituting for the joy Jesus offers in this life and fully in the life to come?
- ❖ Practically speaking, what does it look like to keep your eyes on Jesus?

## Day 4- 2 Thessalonians 2:4

5. The other event that must occur before the Day of the Lord is the man of lawlessness revealed. What other name is he known by in verse 3?

Picture and Ponder: “God is using both good and evil to accomplish His purposes. When the world appears to be caving in around us, calamity is simply another means by which God accomplishes His ends.” –Mark Howell –Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Thessalonians

6. Write a description of the man of lawlessness from the information in verses 3-4.
7. How do you think the man of lawlessness is linked to the rebellion?
8. Paul tells us in verse 4, that the man of lawlessness will set himself up in the temple. This could mean the church or a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Read 1 John 2:18-19, 2 Timothy 3:5 and Matthew 24:24. What particular dangers do you think arise from the anti Christ disguising himself among God’s people?

-How can we guard against these dangers?

Digging Deeper: The man of lawlessness is also known as the anti Christ and the beast. Read Revelation 13:4-8, Daniel 7:25, 8:24-25. What other information is given here about the man of lawlessness?

Digging Deeper: When studying the difficult subject of the end times, where there are so many unanswered questions, what are the truths in the following verses that are important to remember and focus on?

Matthew 24:36-

Matthew 24:12-13-

Matthew 25:1-13-

2 Peter 3:10-11,14

## Day 5- 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12

Digging Deeper: According to verse 6, Paul had told the Thessalonians in the past what is holding back this man of lawlessness or anti Christ. Some theories include the Holy Spirit, human government, the church, the preaching of the gospel or the archangel Michael.

Read Galatians 4:4, Acts 17:26b, 1 Samuel 19:9. Regardless of the means God uses, how do these verses explain what the bottom line is?

9. According to verse 8, why should we not despair over this man of lawlessness? How powerful is Jesus? How does this impact you?



10. Where does the man of lawlessness get his power to perform miracles that lead to deception according to verse 9?

For Discussion: Why are miracles not necessarily a sign of the power of God? Why should signs and wonders never be the foundation or criterion of our faith?

For Discussion: One of Satan's tools of deception is clothing himself as an angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:14) Satan has always tried to counterfeit what God is doing. In the end he will try to deceptively convince people that he is the Messiah. What are all the ways you see Satan trying to imitate what Jesus is doing?

11. Verse 10 gives us insight into why people perish. What is the reason?

12. When they refuse to love the truth, God finally gives them over to their own desires. What three other descriptions does Paul give of those who are perishing in verses 11 and 12?



In verse 12 Paul contrasts *not believing the truth* with *having pleasure in unrighteousness*. 1 Corinthians 13:6 Paul again contrasts truth and unrighteousness, saying that, "love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth." (HCSB) The main problem with the unbelieving human heart is not that it lacks the facts, but that it finds pleasure in unrighteousness. (Although we do need the facts to understand and receive the gospel message.)

What Paul is saying here is valuable for us as believers so that we can test our own hearts. Take a few moments and reflect:

- ❖ Do I welcome God's Word to shine the light of truth on the sin in my life?
- ❖ Do I pray for God to reveal my hidden faults and the sin in my life that I am blind to?
- ❖ Do I justify my sin by tweaking what God's Word says or by ignoring it altogether?
- ❖ Do I find pleasure in my sin?

It is also a valuable way for us to pray for the unbelievers we know and love- that the sin they love would no longer bring pleasure, but reveal itself as empty, futile and unrewarding and that God in his mercy would soften their hearts to the truth and beauty of who he is.

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?