

The Thessalonian Believers Stand Firm in Their Faith 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's righteous purposes are revealed in the present persecution of believers.
2. God's righteous purposes will be revealed in the future punishment of unbelievers.

Practical Application

1. Would the apostle Paul boast about you?

Questions

1. When was 2 Thessalonians written and what was the purpose of writing it?
2. What problem did Paul address in 2 Thessalonians?
3. How did Paul reassure them?
4. Why does God allow believers to be persecuted?
5. Is God the source of the evil done to believers?
6. What are the two classes of unbelievers who will be judged by God?
7. Does destruction mean annihilation?

Answers

1. It was written in the early 50's A.D., in response to how the Thessalonian believers received Paul's first letter.
2. Some Thessalonian believers did not understand the day of the Lord. They thought it had already started because of the persecutions they were facing.
3. He wrote that the tribulations they are facing now were not the tribulations of the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord was (and is) still future.
4. They are part of the righteous purposes of God.
5. No, He is not the source, but He overrules, controls, limits, and uses it to accomplish His purposes. See Psalm 76:10 and Romans 8:28.
6. Those who do not know about God and those who do, but have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ.
7. No. It means separation from God.

Discuss / Consider

1. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5. From a natural point of view, this is a hard concept, but persecutions are part of the righteous purposes of God. Has your faith been tested in the crucible of persecution?

2. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6,8-9. This, too, is a difficult concept, that there are people who will be punished with everlasting destruction, banished from the presence of God. In Romans 1 we see that no one has an excuse, because God has revealed Himself even in creation. There also are those who have heard and rejected the word. There are consequences for these choices, yet we are told that God is not willing that any should perish. Remember that one day God will make this plain, and that His righteous standards demand righteous judgment.

Challenge

1. Paul boasted about the faith of the Thessalonian believers. Would he boast about your faith?

The Day of the Lord
2 Thessalonians 2:1-10

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The day of the Lord cannot come before the apostasy is present.**
- 2. The day of the Lord cannot come before the man of sin is revealed.**
- 3. The day of the Lord cannot come before the restrainer is removed.**

Practical Application

- 1. You are never too young to study prophecy.**

Questions

1. Both the rapture and the day of the Lord deal with the return of the Lord, but they are not identical. Explain.
2. What is a “mystery”?
3. Is the rapture a mystery? Is the day of the Lord a mystery?
4. Could the rapture occur at any time?
5. Could the day of the Lord happen at any time?
6. List the signs associated with the day of the Lord.

Answers

1. The rapture is the return of the Lord for His church. The day of the Lord includes the tribulation and the subsequent return of the Lord to this earth to set up His glorious kingdom.
2. A mystery is a doctrine not revealed in the Old Testament, but clearly revealed in the New Testament.
3. Yes, it is a new teaching in the New Testament. No, the Old Testament speaks clearly about the day of the Lord.
4. Yes. It is imminent. There are no prophetic signs that need to be fulfilled before the Lord returns to rapture His church home to heaven.
5. The day of the Lord cannot come until the associated signs are present. As of yet, the signs are not present.
6. a. The coming of the apostasy or falling away.
b. The revealing of the man of sin.
c. The removal of restraint.

Discuss / Consider

1. There have been departures from the truth and heresies within the church, but there has not yet been a wholesale renunciation and abandonment of the faith with Christendom. When that occurs, Christendom will worship the anti-Christ. "Let no one deceive you...unless the falling away comes first."
2. The man of sin is the anti-Christ, also called the son of perdition. He will only be a man, but he will claim to be God. He will set himself up in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, showing himself to be God. Remember, he will be destroyed when the Lord returns to this earth in power and glory.
3. The restrainer is the Holy Spirit. At the present time He is restraining the revelation of the man of sin and the unleashing of lawlessness. He is restraining evil through the Church, indwelling it and the individual believer. See 1 Corinthians 3:16. At the rapture the Holy Spirit and the Church will be taken away. Then tribulation will come like this world has never seen. Aren't you thankful that you are part of His church and will not suffer God's wrath upon this earth?

Challenge

1. Heavy prophetic truths are covered in 2 Thessalonians, but the young believers believed them. Don't sell young Christians short on understanding prophecy.

Being Firmly Established in the Faith
2 Thessalonians 2:11-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. People who will not believe cannot believe.

2. People who do believe must believe.

Practical Application

1. Don't hold the wrong traditions.

Questions

1. The future day of the Lord cannot come until some prophesied events take place. What are these events?

2. Is the rapture a part of the day of the Lord, or does it precede it, or follow it?

3. What is the first part of the future day of the Lord?

4. Was it possible for the Thessalonians to be deceived or misled concerning the timing of future events?

5. Could a believer today be deceived or misled about the timing of future events as outlined in Scripture?

Answers

1. a. The great apostasy or falling away.
b. The coming of the anti-Christ.
c. The removal of the Holy Spirit.
2. The rapture must be before the day of the Lord.
3. The Great Tribulation.
4. Yes. According to Paul's letter, they could be deceived by
 - a. Spirit or prophecy.
 - b. Word or message or report.
 - c. Forged letter.
5. Yes, in the same ways.

Discuss / Consider

1. God is not the author of the lie, or anything false. Rather, He is the source of that which blinds the unbelievers to the truth they've already rejected. For example, see Matthew 13:13-14. Do you know people who will not believe, and thus cannot believe?

2. God chose you from the beginning. The sovereignty of God in electing of some people for salvation is a great truth. The responsibility of all people to believe the gospel when it is presented to them is also a great truth. These truths are not contradictory, but complimentary. Don't let these complementary truths disturb you. Everyone who is saved by the gospel must believe.

Challenge

1. Paul exhorted the Thessalonian believers to stand firm and hold the traditions they were taught from the word of God. But man-made traditions are to be closely examined, because they may hinder the work of the Lord. Which traditions are you holding?

Living a Prayerful and Orderly Christian Life
2 Thessalonians 3:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Believers should follow the model prayer life of the Apostle Paul.**

- 2. Believers should follow the model lifestyle of the Apostle Paul.**

Practical Application

- 1. You don't have to fear the Devil.**

Questions

1. What is the main theme of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians?
2. Why did Paul write these epistles?
3. What specific issues did Paul cover?
4. List some practical exhortations Paul gave for godly living in view of these great doctrinal truths.
5. What was Paul's primary concern in prayer?

Answers

1. The Return of the Lord.
2. To answer questions that the Thessalonian believers had about the Lord's return.
3. He distinguished clearly between the rapture and the day of the Lord. The rapture of the church is imminent, and therefore, the Lord could come back at any time for His church. The day of the Lord has prophetic signs associated with it, which have not yet happened. The day of the Lord includes the coming tribulation period of the end times, the return of the Lord to the earth in judgment, and the glorious thousand-year reign of our Lord on the earth.
4. Believers should pray for one another, and that they would know more of the love of God. He also wrote that the believers were to follow exemplary Christians lives, giving them a sound example in his own life.
5. His primary concern was for the work of the Lord, that the word of God would spread effectively and not be hindered.

Discuss / Consider

1. Paul realized the importance of prayer. He wanted the Thessalonian believers to pray for him, just as he prayed for them. Paul asked them to pray that the word of the Lord might run swiftly and be glorified, and that he would be delivered from the unreasonable and wicked men. He prayed that their hearts would be directed into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. Are people praying for you? Are you praying for other? Are your prayers like those of Paul?

2. Paul could say that he was an example to follow because he labored in love without compensation by men. Is your lifestyle an example to others?

Challenge

1. Paul wrote that the Lord would establish and guard you from the evil one. You need to be aware of Satan and his tactics and strategy, but if you walk with the Lord, trusting Him, you do not have to fear the Devil.

**Leading Disciplined Lives; The Closing of the Epistle
2 Thessalonians 3:10-18**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Laziness has no place in a believer's lifestyle.
2. Leeching has no place in a believer's lifestyle.

Practical Application

1. Can you say, "I don't have time to gossip?"

Questions

1. Why is the benediction of this epistle considered typical of Paul?
2. What is the common feature of these verses: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2:16-17; 3:5; and 3:16?
3. Why did some believers stop working?
4. What was the result of idleness?
5. How did Paul deal with these problems?
6. What is "leeching"?

Answers

1. In all of Paul's epistles he wrote, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."
2. They were all prayers.
3. They were waiting for the Lord's return.
4. They became busybodies, lazy, disorderly, moochers, gossipers.
5. He warned them that if they don't work, they shouldn't eat. When they failed to heed the warning, he then commanded them to work. If they did not, they were to be separated from fellowship.
6. It is the same as freeloading, reaping the benefits of someone else's work.

Discuss / Consider

1. Laziness has no place in a believer's lifestyle. A person who can work should work and not be supported by others. Do you know some lazy, freeloading Christians?

2. Review Paul's biblical pattern for freeloaders in this section of Scripture: warn them, command them to work, separate them from fellowship, and admonish them. Do you apply these principles in your family as well?

Challenge

1. Some Thessalonian believers were busybodies and gossipers because they had time on their hands. It's too easy to slide or drift into gossip when you sit around doing nothing. Gossip is a sin, and should have no place in a believer's life. Avoid it by working.