

signifies that Jesus Christ has only one body and all members are part of that one body; eating of the bread demonstrates the unity and fellowship with the Lord Jesus and with other believers)

12. Why will Jesus Christ come again? What is His purpose? (to judge the unrepentant, Jude 14-15; to reward the righteous, Mt 25:34; to establish His kingdom, Dan 17:14; to destroy all physical existence and create a new universe, 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 21:1)

REFLECTION & PRAYER



2000 years ago, a Savior was born to us. This good news of great joy shows us that salvation has come for all mankind (Lk 2:10-11). The Lord Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom, and healed every disease and sickness among the people, revealing the fact that we can benefit physically as well as spiritually from God's salvation (Mt 4:23). At age 33, He fulfilled God's plan of salvation by dying on the cross and shedding His precious blood for the remission of sins. On the third day, Christ was resurrected. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Cor 15:20-22). The Lord Jesus' resurrection brings us God's perfect salvation. Our faith in Him is not in vain, but of a living hope: that the heavenly kingdom is reserved for us and those who are saved will also resurrect on the Last Day and enjoy eternal life.

Lesson 8

Waiting for the Lord's Coming (2 Thessalonians)

Listed Scriptures

2 Thessalonians

Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn the roles we need to play and attitudes we need to have as we await the Lord Jesus' second coming

Memory Verse

"We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." (2 Thess 1:11)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 36-40

BIBLE BACKGROUND



Paul wrote the second letter to the Thessalonians about half a year after the first, about 51 AD in Corinth. The Thessalonians were greatly encouraged and comforted after receiving Paul's first letter. However, some of them misunderstood the truth concerning resurrection. These people went about spreading false teachings about the resurrection and even impersonated Paul while doing so (2 Thess 2:1-2). As a result, certain believers were led to believe the Lord's Day was fast approaching, so there was no point in working any longer. They began loafing around as busybodies awaiting for the Lord's second coming. This created quite a nuisance for the church. Therefore, Paul wrote this second letter to address and correct such heresy, and advised the believers to work quietly and walk in the truth. This lesson has much connection to the previous lessons since it follows the same theme of salvation and concerns Jesus Christ's second coming. Therefore, it is important to stress this as the lesson is shared.



What would you spend your time doing if you knew that Jesus Christ was going to come again in one week? What if it were going to happen in one month? How about one year or a decade? Do any of the things on your list change? Why? The way we perceive time obviously changes the way we do things. We are creatures of procrastination and when we think we have a lot of time, we tend to put off what we really should be doing. However, if we knew we had little or no time left, we try hard to finish what is important to us. In today's lesson, some of the Thessalonians thought that Jesus Christ was going to come again very soon, but interestingly, they didn't do important work for God. Let's find out what they spent their time doing instead.

Teaching Tips

The first section of the Bible study is a literal interpretation of the book of 2 Thessalonians. You may wish to select only certain topics to discuss or you may wish to divide the students into groups to share their findings (if you would like to cover all three chapters of the book). Alternatively, you can also use the guideline in Part 2 as a springboard for your study since it is more theme based.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

2 Thessalonians



A . Witnesses of Persecution (2 Thess 1)

We are God's witnesses (Isa 43:10). If we can stand our ground in the face of persecution and tribulation, it will show our true mettle in faith and bring glory to God's name. We can really look up to the Thessalonians as role models in this regard.

a. Great Faith (1:3-4)

Paul mentioned how the local believers did not cower in fear because of

the increase of persecution and suffering. On the contrary, their faith grew stronger because they drew comfort and joy from the Holy Spirit (1:3-4). They also extended care and concern to support others in need out of their kindness. This really demonstrates the substance and sincerity of their love. It also validates that, when powered by faith, we can break through any obstacles placed in our way. Paul was greatly comforted by their actions.

b. Suffering for the Kingdom of God (1:5)

When we recognize that the value of heaven surpasses all else in life, we can grit our teeth and gladly endure for God. As a result of our perseverance and enduring faith under fire, we will be counted worthy to enter the kingdom of God.

c. The Oppressors Will Be Punished (1:6-10)

God is just. He will judge those who give us trouble. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel. They will be sent to everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power. Paul explained how God will administer His justice in order to raise the spirits of the believers in tribulation. We should consider it an honor to suffer for the sake of the Lord (Acts 5:41). Rather than repaying evil for evil, we need to pray for our oppressors because they persecute us out of their ignorance (Rom 12:21). We should pray that God may bring them to repentance and entry to heaven.

d. Be Determined (1:11-12)

Believers are in greater need of God's protection when confronted with tribulations. Only by turning to God through constant prayers can we stand firm in the face of adversity. May God's love make us determined to fulfill God's every good purpose in us so that we may bear fruit and offer them to God.



B . Standing Firm in Hope (2 Thess 2)

a. Do not Be Deceived (2:1-3)

Before the Lord's second coming, many heresies and sacrilege will take place. We need to be careful so that we are not fooled or misled. The Lord Jesus has made it very clear what the signs will be before His coming (Mt 24:36). We can tell that Jesus Christ's coming is drawing very near just through the turmoil that is happening all around the world. We must remain watchful, but not get

caught up in the exact time nor believe in others' speculation.

b. The Man of Lawlessness (2:3-12)

It is in the nature of the lawless man to exalt himself and put himself higher than God. The lawless one will be able to perform the work of Satan, displaying all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders (2 Thess 2:9). But the true believers who fear God, persevere in the truth and trust in the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to steer clear of these temptations. Moreover, God will destroy him with His coming glory. His conclusion will be eternal doom.

c. Standing Firm in Hope (2:13-17)

As we eagerly long for the Lord's coming, we need to hold on to the truth and discern wisely. We should submit to the movement of the Holy Spirit and pursue purity.



C. Maturity in Faith (2 Thess 3)

a. Prayer (3:1-5)

We need to persevere in prayer. We should learn to endure as Christ did. Then no matter what situation we are in, God will strengthen and protect us. We should also pray that God will send His workers so that His message will spread quickly and bring Him honor. In addition, we should pray that God will deliver the preachers from oppositions and frustrations as they go about preaching the gospel.

b. Daily Living (3:6-12)

We should live according to God's teachings as our guiding principle. While we are waiting in hope for God, we still need to work and earn a living to support our family and the holy work. We should not be idle freeloaders and we should keep away from those who refuse to earn their bread, rejecting God's teachings. However, as much as we need to work, we should also take time out for worship and work for God. We need to let our lives bring honor to God and win favor among men.

c. Be Loving (3:13-15)

We should never grow weary in doing good. We should be generous and willing to share with the needy (1 Tim 6:18-19). If anyone has material pos-

sessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth (1Jn 3:17-18). At the same time, we should mutually support one another. We should remind and correct each other out of genuine love, comfort the grieving, encourage the feeble and warn those who wander off the truth. This way, everyone will grow together in love to build up a perfect church.



Part 2

Two Problems



A. Misunderstandings Concerning the Last Days

Many of the believers in Thessalonica thought that Jesus Christ was going to come again in their lifetime. In fact, some people were impersonating Paul and spreading false teachings concerning the last days (2 Thess 2:1-3). Although the church today also preaches that the judgment day is fast approaching, we must have a correct understanding of what the end days will be like.

- a. It will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess 5:2).
- b. The exact time will be unknown (Mt 24:36).
- c. There will be constant wars, famine, earthquakes, religious persecutions and a steep decline in morality.



B. Incorrect Attitudes

As a result of the believers' misunderstandings, some people decided to quit their jobs and wait for Jesus Christ to return. But instead of making themselves useful, they ended up living off others. It is important to have the correct attitude concerning Jesus Christ's return and how it should affect our daily living.

- a. work and/or study responsibly
- b. be alert (Mk 13:32-37; Lk 12:37-40)
- c. be self-controlled
- d. lead a quiet life
- e. perform deeds of love (Mt 25:31-46; 1 Pet 4:7-8)
- f. be a faithful steward (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 12:42-44)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Why do you think God has not revealed the exact time of Jesus Christ's return?

2 Why do you think some believers quit their jobs and loafed around?

3 What do you think is the most important message of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians?

4 What are some of the correct attitudes we should have while waiting for the Lord's second coming?

5 Remember the list that you made at the beginning of the lesson. Is there anything on it you would add or delete now? Why or why not?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Strike a Healthy Balance

If every day, you had \$86,400 deposited into your bank account, what would you do with it? You could use it any way you wanted to, but the only stipulation being whatever you had left over at the end of the day could not be saved up for the following day. That means that every day you check your account, you will have \$86,400 but you would have to use it up every day in order to maximize your benefits. Some of you might be thinking that it would be best to withdraw all the money so that you could just store it up as cash. That's smart, but what if that option wasn't available? Then we would really think twice about how we could use the money to our advantage. In fact, we do have that kind of money in our possession every day. Each day has 86,400 seconds. But just like the bank account, you can't store up time. If you waste it, it can not be saved for the next day. If we really think about it, time is just as precious as looking at \$86,400. The Thessalonians thought so too, only they didn't use their time wisely. In fact, they weren't the only ones.

More recently in history, in the late 1990s, many cults and religious orders truly believed that Jesus Christ was going to come again because of the year 2000.

Some of you may remember a certain cult that lived in Waco, Texas, U.S.A. The people who belonged to this religious sect obviously held some wrong beliefs to begin with, since one man was their leader and many of the women were his wives. In the end they killed themselves, thinking they were on their way to heaven. There was also another Chinese sect who called themselves the Gateway to Heaven (also located in Texas). They thought that Jesus Christ was going to come again soon and judge the world. Many of the believers sold their homes, quit their jobs and just basically waited for the clock to tick away. But the millennium came and went and nothing happened. Although we don't hear much about them today, it makes us wonder what was going through their minds then and what they are thinking now.

These people were not that different than some of the Thessalonians, in the respect that they held some wrong attitudes concerning the second coming of Christ and how they chose to spend their time waiting. We may not know that exact date but we do know that it is coming soon. But soon could mean tomorrow or next year or even the next millennium. Our concept of time is not that of God's. Basically, we don't know. But that doesn't mean that we should sell our homes and just wait or do the opposite, living our lives freely and not worry about God at all. What we really need to do is to strike a healthy balance. We know that there are 86,400 seconds at our disposal every day. What we do with it can either glorify God or not. At this point in your lives, the best way to use your time is to strike a healthy balance between faith and school. We listed some things we would do if we knew the world was going to end next month. Obviously school would not be all that important. But since we don't know and shouldn't guess when the Lord will come again, we need to work hard at our academics in the meantime. Even getting good grades can bring glory to God. Can you think of some ways it can glorify God? At the same time, we need to be able to hold on strong to our faith. Although it is not always easy to do, we need to pray and read the Bible on a regular basis. Many of you are thinking about college and leaving home is a very real option. How can you ensure that you can balance your faith and academics in such a way that best shines for God?

The way we choose to spend even one second of our lives is important to God. When we can strike a healthy balance and truly live for God, then we will reap the rewards of the heavenly kingdom.)



2 Thessalonians continues the theme of the Lord's coming from the first letter. It talks in greater detail about the signs of the end time. Many heresies and false teachings will appear to deceive the world. We just can't be too careful about the trends, philosophies and beliefs swirling around us. We need to discern wisely and resist rather than conform to those around us. However, we can't just lock ourselves in a house and wait. We need to work diligently at school or at our jobs and not be a loafing busybody. As we wait patiently for the Lord, we should also be thankful and pursue spiritual perfection. This is the only way to glorify God and reap the rewards of the heavenly kingdom.