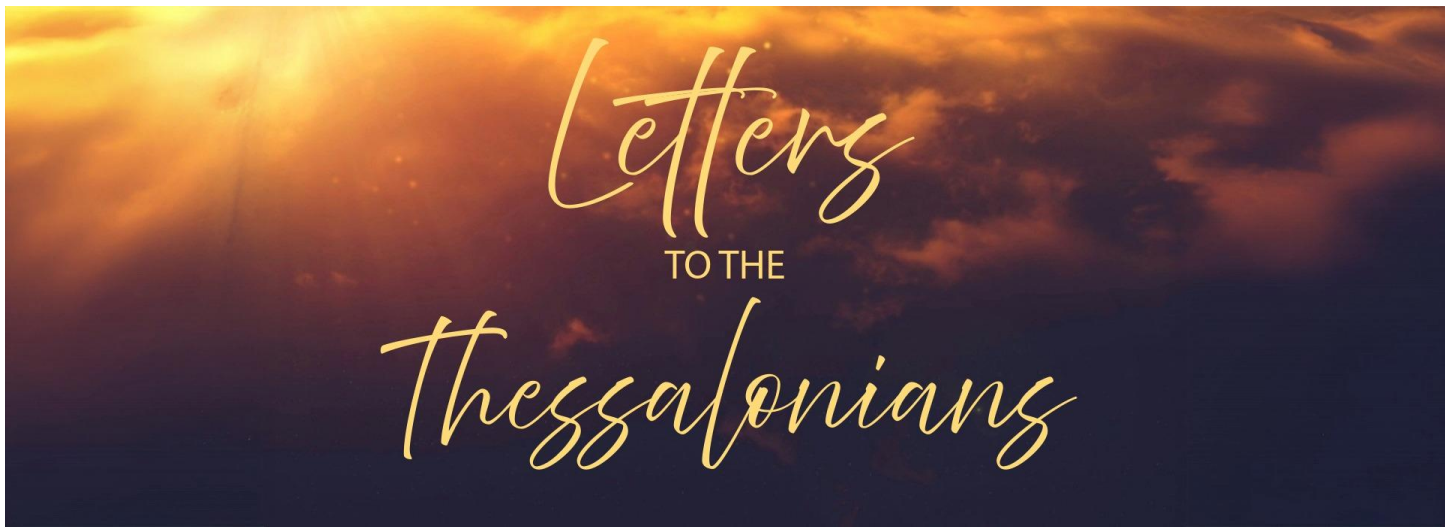




## **Week 7 – Letters to the Thessalonians**

### **Outline: Persecution, Lawlessness, and Hope**

#### **1. Persecution is Nothing New**

- Definition: to harass or punish for differences (religion, origin, outlook).
  - Paul writes to Thessalonians about persecution (2 Thess. 1:5–6).
  - Modern reminders (9/11 and recent tragedies).
  - We are created in the image of God (Gen. 2).
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#### **2. The Hope of His Return**

- Gathering together in worship → anticipating the final gathering (2 Thess. 2:1).
  - Danger of impatience and selfish prayers for His return.
  - The call to meditate on Christ's return with reverence, not escapism.
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#### **3. Don't Be Deceived (2 Thess. 2:2–3)**

- False reports of Christ's return already happening.
  - A great rebellion will come first, then the "man of lawlessness."
  - Historic speculations:
    - Roman emperors (Nero, Domitian, Diocletian).
    - Religious figures (Muhammad, the papacy).
    - Modern leaders (Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Saddam).
  - Modern temptation: to speculate about current figures → instead, stay watchful and discerning.
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#### **4. The Restraint (2 Thess. 2:6–7)**

- Evil is already at work, but restrained.
  - Holy Spirit at work in the church is the true restraint.
  - Even in tragedy, God works for good (Gen. 50:20).
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#### **5. The Lawless One vs. The Returning King**

- The Antichrist will not just oppose Christ, but attempt to replace Him.
  - Many candidates in history, but only one will fulfill God's timing.
  - Jesus will slay him with the breath of His mouth (2 Thess. 2:8).
  - Revelation 19:11–16 → Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords.
  - Physical restoration, spiritual vindication, eternal victory.
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#### **6. Be Prudent, Not Deceived**

- Warning: false miracles and enjoyment of evil (2 Thess. 2:9–12).
  - Response: Stand firm and hold on to sound teaching (2 Thess. 2:15–17).
  - Our focus is not on the Antichrist but on Christ.
  - Mission: Share the hope of Christ's return with others.
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## Key Takeaways

- Persecution is real, but God uses it to refine His people.
- Don't let fear or speculation distract you.
- Christ's return will be unmistakable and victorious.
- Until then, stand firm, hold fast, and spread hope.