

Small Group Notes

Sermon: 21 May 2023



The comfort of considering Jesus' return

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

SCRIPTURE

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OVERVIEW

One of Paul's main reasons for writing this letter is addressed in chapter 2, namely that the church is worried that the Day of the Lord (Jesus' second coming) has come and gone – and they missed it. Paul refutes this unequivocally. Jesus has not come back yet!

They need not be alarmed as he reminds them in brief of what he taught them in full when he was with them: that there would be 3 signs preceding Jesus' return – 1) a rebellion, 2) a man of lawlessness is revealed, and 3) whatever was restraining this man would be removed.

Paul further reminded them that, when Jesus does return, the man of lawlessness will be destroyed, and all rebellion and unrighteousness will be ultimately and eternally dealt with. Further reassurance that they haven't missed it as these acts will be clear for all to see.

This passage is notoriously hard to interpret accurately – since Paul is reminding them of his in-person teachings, we only have headlines with no further details. This can cause us confusion, or to be fearful of whether they've happened already or are still to come. (Or, perhaps, are happening right now!)

Paul's chief aim isn't to pass on information but to impart comfort (2 Thess 2:16-17) – that for believers, the thought of the Day of the Lord should bring peace and reassurance that He will take all who are His with Him into eternity,

and that all that is against Him will be eternally condemned. The signs are not meant to be our fixation, but rather the one the signs point to, Jesus.

For unbelievers, the Day of the Lord is a frightening day – but, since it has not come yet, the way to eternal life is still wide open since Jesus paid the price for all sin when he first came and sacrificed himself on the cross. God is 'not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance' (2 Peter 3:9).

DISCUSSION

1. How often do you consider the Day of the Lord/Jesus' second coming? When you do, what do you think about and how does it make you feel?
2. How can considering the future reality of Jesus' return help with our current worries and fears about our earthly futures? What is it about your future that you are worried about now? How does knowing Jesus is returning bring comfort into that situation?
3. Passages like this often require further study of the Bible to help grow in understanding. How do you find deeply studying the Bible? What helps you to do it, and what makes it hard?
4. Passages like this also require us to approach the Bible humbly, to accept

there are things we simply do not fully understand – the hard part is knowing to which passages this applies! How do you find accepting our ultimately limited ability to understand all of Scripture?

5. Why is it important for us to talk about Jesus' second coming when we share the gospel with unbelievers?