

Reflecting on 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 November 22, 2020

Introduction: In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul revisits the topic of the Day of Lord. Throughout the passage, he reveals a timeline of events of the end times. In doing so, he corrects a misunderstanding in the Thessalonian church, and encourages them toward confidence and hope. Here is an outline of Paul's timeline:

1. A time of preparation where the lawless one is restrained and the mystery of lawlessness takes root (6-7)
2. A Great Rebellion against God (3b)
3. The appearance of the man of Lawlessness will come with signs, miracles, and a pervasive deception (3c-4, 8a, 9)
4. A time of judgment for those who refuse to believe and follow the man of lawlessness (10-12)
5. A triumph for Jesus Christ over the man of Lawlessness (8b)

Here is the Big Idea of the passage: *The onset of end-time events should make Christians eager and confident, not anxious and fearful. (1-3a)*

Up for Discussion:

1. What was the most important part of the message for you to hear this morning?
2. What makes the end time events as described in biblical prophecy so interesting? Or if you don't find them interesting, why are they not interesting to you?
3. The Thessalonian church had several misunderstandings about the end times which caused them to move away from the truth toward unwarranted anxiety. (vv. 2-3) A true understanding of end time events should make us eager and confident. Has your understanding of biblical prophecy ever been a source of fear and alarm? If so, please share with the group.

4. Verse 7 tells us the “mystery of lawlessness” is already at work at the time of Paul’s writing. This describes a pervasive spirit within the world that reacts against God’s law. What manifestations of this spirit of lawlessness have you observed in our country?

5. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul describes the rapture of the church and the raising of those who had died in Christ. Where does this event fit in the timeline we established from our text this morning? (Keep in mind that the Scriptures are not entirely clear on this.)

6. Paul’s purpose in sharing 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is found in verse 18 (“Therefore encourage one another with these words.”). His purpose in sharing the present passage (2 Thessalonians 2) is to keep his readers from being fearful and to give them hope. How does the triumphant return of Jesus in the future give us hope in our lives today?