

Sermon Notes 12/12/21
"Signs of the Times"

How can we be ready for the end times?

1. Don't be _____ or _____.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

2. Remember, no matter what happens, Jesus _____.

2 Thessalonians 2:5

2 Thessalonians 2:8

3. Live in response to the _____.

2 Thessalonians 2:14

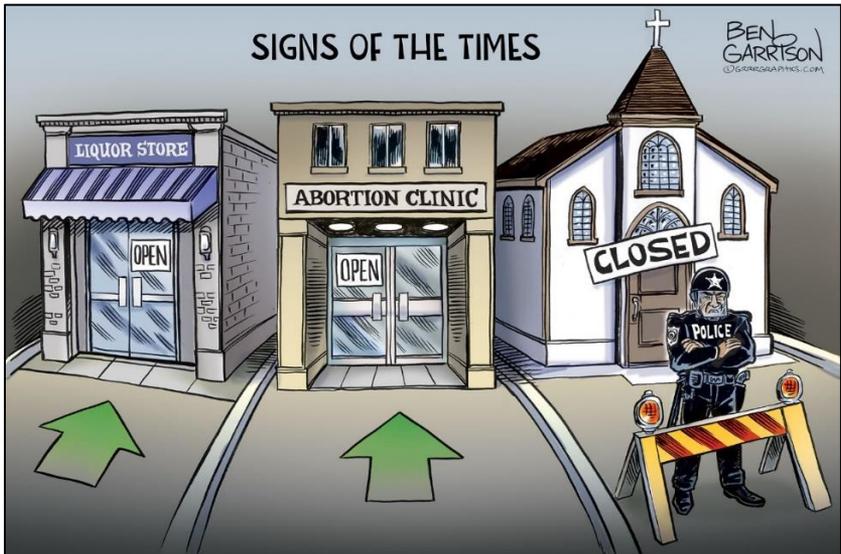
2 Thessalonians 1:8

4. Hold on to the _____ of God's word.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

2 Thessalonians 2:13



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 9: December 12-18

2 Thessalonians 2

Unbelievers need to be warned about the final judgment. However, as Christians, we should find comfort and encouragement when we read what the Bible says about the return of Christ. That was Paul's purpose when he wrote about the end times in First Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11). Unfortunately, someone in Thessalonica was telling them that the return of Christ had already happened (2 Thess. 2:2). As a result, many Christians were worried and confused about the end times. Paul wrote this chapter to correct that false teaching. This is an important chapter for Christians today. Many false teachers are speaking and writing about prophecy in a way that makes believers anxious about end time events. However, the Bible describes the end times as a message of good news for those who remain faithful to Jesus.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. What subject was Paul addressing? (2:1)

2. Why did some of the Thessalonians think that they may have missed the return of Christ? (2:2)

Someone was using Paul's name to spread this false doctrine. Whether it came through a "prophecy, report, or letter," Paul wanted the Christians to test any message against the truth of Scripture (Acts 17:11). Jon Weatherly notes,

In effect Paul is calling for a specific application of his instructions in 1 Thess 5:21: the Thessalonians are to test this alleged apostolic message by what they know to be true about the gospel, as Paul will remind them of it in vv. 3-12. He further addresses the problem of messages falsely claiming to come from him in 3:17.¹

3. What did Paul say would happen before the day of the Lord? (2:3)

¹ Jon A. Weatherly, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 245.

4. How did Paul describe the man of lawlessness? (2:4)

The Bible only mentions the term “Antichrist” in 1 John 2:18-22; 4:3; and 2 John 7. However, the term “man of lawlessness” may be Paul’s way of referring to the same spirit or person.

5. What did Paul want the Thessalonians to remember in verse 5?

6. Why was the man of lawlessness being held back? (2:6-7)

Jack Cottrell explains how this passage may be a parallel to Revelation 20:7-10. He writes,

The “man of lawlessness” seems to be a final and extreme form of “Anti-Christ.” He is also called the “son of destruction,” since his mission is to destroy the church (“the camp of the saints of the beloved city”). His weapons are “deception” (v. 10) and “apostasy” (v. 3). He is under restraint throughout the church age, which is the time of the binding of Satan; but in the end the restraint is withdrawn, which is the loosing of Satan (v. 6-7). He himself is a “man of lawlessness,” i.e., sin and wickedness; and those under his power accept his deception to justify their own wickedness (“the deception of wickedness,” v. 10; “took pleasure in wickedness,” v. 12). Jesus destroys him at “the appearance of His coming,” v. 8 (i.e., the fire from heaven in Revelation 20:9).²

7. What will happen to the man of lawlessness when Jesus returns? (2:8)

Jesus will overthrow and destroy His enemies “by the splendor of his coming.” Weatherly comments,

“Splendor” translates ἐπιφάνεια (epiphaneia), often used as a technical term for the visible manifestation of a deity, especially a sudden appearance in a hostile situation. In the New Testament it is used only of the appearance of Christ, usually of his return (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13), though once of his first appearance on earth (2 Tim 1:10).³

² Jack Cottrell, *From Now to Eternity: Prophecy and the End Times* (Mason, OH: The Christian Restoration Association, 2019), 98.

³ Weatherly, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 265.

8. How did Paul describe the work of the man of lawlessness? (2:9-10)
9. What will God do to those who delight in wickedness and refuse to love the truth? (2:11-12)

This is like the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh's heart was hardened both by God (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8) and by Pharaoh himself (8:15, 32; 9:34). We know from Romans 1:18-32 that there is a point when God gives people over to their sinful lifestyles. Weatherly observes,

In all these cases God's rule over the world is preserved along with human responsibility. In each case God sends that which leads to hardening, deception and sin, but in each case he sends it only in response to the rejection of his message which the human subject has already chosen.⁴

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

10. Why did Paul thank God for the Thessalonians in verse 13?
11. How does Paul describe the work of the Spirit in verse 13?
12. According to verse 14, how does God call people to salvation?
13. What did Paul command the Thessalonians to hold on to in verse 15?
14. What was Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians in verses 16-17?
15. How close do you think we are to the return of Christ? Why?
16. What can a person do to get ready for Christ's return?
17. How can we know if a miracle is from God or from Satan?
18. What does it mean to stand firm as a Christian?
19. What specific truth in the Bible do you need to hold on to this week?
20. How will you encourage another believer this week?

⁴ Weatherly, 269.