

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"CARBONATED CHRISTIANS" | 2 THESSALONIANS 2 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is something that you hate missing out on?

"I'm All Shook Up" (2 Thess 2: 1-2)

The people had become very worried and uneasy that they had missed Jesus' coming for them because of rumors and false teachings. **When Christ followers become very anxious about God's plan, what does that do to their growth and impact?**

"Paul Relieves the Pressure" (2 Thess 2: 3-9)

Paul reassures the people that the Rapture hasn't happened yet because specific signs and events involving the Antichrist haven't occurred yet. **Why is it helpful to have people like Paul to reassure believers of God's plan and control? Who does that for you?**

"Those Who Reject the Truth" (2 Thess 2: 10-12)

Paul points out that people who reject God do so because they "refused to love the truth" and "had pleasure in unrighteousness". **How do desires impact what people believe and their acceptance of God's truth?**

"Those Who Receive the Truth" (2 Thess 2: 13-17)

Paul reminds the people that they should be thankful, stand firm and hold to the teachings because they were chosen and called to be part of Christ's glory. God won't leave them. **How is thankful obedience different than uneasy anxiety?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul wants to reassure the Thessalonians of God's control and His calling so they could live with firm thanksgiving instead of anxious fear of missing out on God's goodness. **How have you been living lately? What is one thing you could do this week to reduce your worry and increase your grateful obedience? Pray that God will encourage you and give you strength to do this.**

2 Thessalonians 2

9-24-23

Carbonated Christians

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those **online** and in the **Learning Center**.
- B. **Slide1 Missions Prayer**: We invite you to join us **tonight** at **6:30-7:30pm** in the Agape Room for a time of prayer for our **missionaries** and **field partners** *regarding real-time prayer requests*.
- C. **Slide2 Position Opening**: We have a full time job opening. We are looking for *someone with experience as a bookkeeper*, who can also help with **Human Resources**. For more information, call the church office or go on our website.
- D. **Slide3aPrayer**: Lord, we want to keep **trusting** your Word, keep **reading** your Word keep **believing** your Word, & keep **embracing the hero** of your Word, your son **JC**.

II. Intro: Carbonated Christians

- A. **Illust**: Carbonated beverages, are beverages that have **carbon dioxide** (CO₂) added to them. **When** the CO₂ begins to escape, it gives the fizzy drinks their trademark sensation of *the effervescence, the fizz, the bubbles*.
 1. We also all know what happens when it starts to get ... **shaken**.
 2. We all know what happens when **WE** are **shaken**. [Worry invades our **minds**. Something happens that **alarms** us. We sense it in our **spirit**. **Someone says something to us** that we can't shake, **but** it shakes us. **Or** we read something on **FB, IG, or our news feed** that troubles us]
- B. There was a problem with the Thes bel's ... that got them *All Shook Up*.
 1. **They were shook up over**: new prophecies, new letters written in Paul's name, & **new things** that people *said* had apostolic authority.
 2. Paul will comfort them by **letting out the pressure** of the Thes church. Reminding them to stick with what he had already told them.

C. Slide3b Outline: *I'm all shook up. Paul Relieves the Pressure. Those who Reject the Truth. Those who Receive the Truth.*

III. Slide4 I'M ALL SHOOK UP (1,2) READ

A. Slide5 (1) Our being gathered together to Him - i.e. *the Rapture*.

B. (2) Word had circulated that the day of the Lord had come – the day of the Judgment, the 7 yrs Trib (because of the *persecution* that hit the church).

C. A shaking occurred [shaken = a restless tossing of a ship]

1. What's shaken you up this week? Unexpected car repair? A bill you weren't expecting? A friend problem? A co-worker or boss problem? A big test coming up in school? Turmoil in the home? Freaking out about the next elections? Waiting for the next proverbial shoe to drop?

a) *I ask you brothers and sisters, not to be quickly shaken in mind, or alarmed, either by a spirit, or a spoken word, or a letter.*

2. That's why Paul wraps up this letter with *I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write.*

IV. Slide6a PAUL RELIEVES THE PRESSURE (3-9) READ

A. Paul emphatically advises them, *It hasn't happened yet!*

1. Here's the Proof, The Day (7 yrs of Trib) hadn't begun. Paul separates out the rapture from the Tribulation because [these things must take place 1st].

B. Slide6b 1ST, THE REBELLION (3a) [2 things:]

1. The rebellion - αποστασία / Apostasy, the departure. (definite article the, not just a departure)

2. Paul talks about it in more detail in 1 Tim. 4:1-3 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage*

and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

C. Slide6c 2ND, THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS/sin REVEALED (3b-9)

D. This is *the start gun* of the Tribulation.

E. DESCRIBED (3b,4)

F. He's described 1st as *the man of lawlessness/sin* – speaking of his character *as unalterably opposed to God.*

1. If you can control *political, economic & religious power* you have a formula for controlling the world. [like Nebuchadnezzar & his gold image locally in his region]

a) Back in John's day in the Roman Empire, it was *the cult of emperor worship*. [people were *forced to sacrifice* to an image of the emperor]

2. Throughout history *other beasts* have raised their ugly heads. **But none** compare to *the one to come*. He will be the tyrant of Tyrants, dictator of all Dictators. He will be: *Nero, Genghis Khan, Ivan the Terrible, Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Pol Pot, Ceausescu, Hitler, & Osama bin Laden* all wrap in one ... times a billion! (being "satan possessed")

G. Next, as *the son of destruction/perdition* – speaking of his doom to destruction like his forerunner (Judas) experienced, Jn.17:12 *I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled*. [*destruction* = Semitic construction, *he who is destined to be destroyed*]

1. **Other evil men** will come along that will be called lil "a" *antichrists*.

a) 1 Jn.2:18 *Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour*. Charles Ryrie adds, *But this one is the personification of evil, the cultivation of all that is opposed to God.*

2. **Antichrist** = we usually think against Christ, **but** better yet think instead of. (only used by the apostle John)

- a) **AKA:** Daniel calls him, *the little horn*. Paul calls him *the man of sin*. John in the Rev calls him, *the beast out of the sea*. And *Charlie Tuna* called him, *the chicken of the sea*.

H. HIS RELIGION (4)

I. The Tribulation is surely **not w/o religion** - Antichrist is very religious. He becomes an active member **and** the leader of *The 1st church of Me, Myself, & I*.

1. Man was made to worship ... as is proof here.

J. Here, he **opposes God** (*i.e.* tries to *stand in opposition*, he cannot *thwart*)

K. His religious system is connected with **the Temple**.

1. In Dan.9:27 he makes a covenant with the Jews to open the Temple to them for 7 years. He **breaks it** in the middle, known as *the abomination of desolation* (Mt.24:13).

L. RESTRAINED (5-7)

M.(6) **What or who is restraining?** (we don't know, *read 6-8*)

N. The debate lies here. *ID-ing the Restrainer*.

1. Some say, **governments** (cuz their purpose is to restrain evil, *i.e.* Rm.13). **Or, Satan** (doesn't make sense w/vs.7). Others say, **the HS**.

2. **Restrain** means *to hold back, hinder*. This was 1 of the 1st works of the **HS** recorded. Gen.6:3 *My Spirit shall not **strive** with man forever, for he is **indeed flesh***.

O. "Ultimately we see the **HS in the believers**, once the Holy Spirit restraining power through the church is removed, the antichrist will make his move." Chuck Smith

P. Our promise from Mt.16:18 *The gates of hell shall not prevail against **His church***.

1. The church will not go through The tribulation, **because the restrainer will be removed before** the man of sin is revealed.

Q.(7) **Taken out of the way** – **Problem:** *How could the Spirit be taken out?* (omnipresence?)

1. Big difference between one's residence & one's presence.

a) His presence will not be taken away from the earth, just His residence (i.e. the indwelling of the believers).

b) Many will be saved during the tribulation (Rev.7:14) and only **God** can do the work of *regeneration*. Ryrie said, “*God’s universal & permanent residence in His people is a distinctive relationship in that day of Grace.”*

R. **KILLED** (8)

S. This section describes *the power of the man of sin*, yet its underlying note is the **Sovereign and Almighty power of God**.

T. Here is God’s 2-fold military strike: with *His Breath & His Appearance*.

1. **His breath** – from Is.11:4 *He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall kill the wicked.*
2. **His appearance/brightness** – His very appearance will destroy him (not annihilate, **but to render inactive, to put out of commission**).

U. **EMPOWERED** (9)

V. The man antichrist will be *Satan powered* just like Judas.

V. **Slide7a THOSE WHO REJECT THE TRUTH (10-12) READ**

A. **Slide7b THEIR CONSEQUENCE** (10-11)

B. **Note:** upon *loving the truth* we are *saved*. Not just *believing* it (12,13) though imp.

C. The problem isn’t *believing a lie*, **but THE lie**. Everyone’s a believer in something.

D. (11) If you *refuse Christ* in the age of **Grace**, *why do you think you’ll receive him during that 7 year space?* [where **God** rewards them with a **strong delusion**]

E. To those **who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness** -

1. **The deepest problem of unbelief is not the inability to affirm facts, or the lack of awareness.** The deepest problem in the world is that fallen human beings **do not love truth**, we are not by nature **people of the truth**. *We love what serves our fallen appetites.* Piper
2. Interesting Paul says in 1 Cor.13:6 **love does not rejoice at wrongdoing** (lit. unrighteousness), **but rejoices with the truth.**

a) **Unbelief** is always deeper than **facts**, deeper than **lack of light**, it's the **love** of darkness. **Unbelief** then is because of *my love affair with unrighteousness*.

F. Slide7c **THEIR CONDEMNATION** (12)

G. Their judgment (God giving them a *strong delusion*) is justified.

1. You can't go any lower than this - *complete opposition to God & His truth*.

VI. Slide8a **THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE TRUTH** (13-17) READ only 13,14

A. But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because [their source] God chose you as the firstfruits (or chose you from the beginning) to be **saved** (salvation), [their method] through **sanctification by the Spirit** and [their means] **belief in the truth** [another blend of *divine* & *human*].

14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that [their goal] you may obtain the **glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Slide8b John Stott brilliantly summed it up this way, *"In the eternity of the past God **chose us** to be saved. Then He **called us** in time, causing us to hear the gospel, believe the truth and be **sanctified** by the Spirit, with a view to our sharing Christ's glory in the eternity of the future. In a single sentence the apostles mind sweeps from "the beginning" to "the glory". There is no room in such a conviction for fears about Christian instability. Let the devil mount his fiercest attack on the feeblest saint, let the Antichrist be revealed and the rebellion break out, yet over against the instability of our circumstances and our characters, we set the **eternal stability of the purpose of God**."* We simply glance to the next ch.3:3 *But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. Wow!*

B. Slide9a Their Responsibilities (READ 15-17) *stand firm, Hold to the traditions.*

C. Traditions – *hold fast to the soon to be written down traditions of the Apostles.*

1. Remember, this is only the **3rd book** out of 27, penned so far (50,51ad).

D. Slide9b What were we reminded of this morning? Don't be *Carbonated Christians* (shaken). Your **not in** the trib. You **didn't** miss the Rapture. You **don't** have to deal w/

the man of lawlessness. **Stand firm. Hold on to** all that the apostles taught. Our Father **loves** you, **chose** you, is **sanctifying** you, will **glorify** you, and presently is giving you eternal *encouragement, hope, grace, comfort, strength*, in every word & work.

E. Keywords: Second Coming, truth, Satan.