

A close-up photograph of a person's hand and wrist. The hand is positioned with the index finger pointing upwards and slightly to the left. The wrist is wearing a watch with a round, dark face and a brown leather strap. The background is dark and textured.

A STUDY OF II THESSALONIANS

**Staying
Ready
For The
Second
Coming**

A PUBLICATION OF RAY REYNOLDS RAP

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Ray Reynolds, Ph.D.



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INTRODUCTION

Author:

Paul, the apostle (**II Thessalonians 1:1**), formerly Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 8-9**) identifies himself as the author of this letter. He uses Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy to aid him with the writing, like he did in the first letter. The early church unanimously accepted it as from Paul and quoted it often.

Date:

It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it around 50-51 AD in the city of Corinth. It was written as a follow-up letter to clarify some things mentioned in the first letter and to help ease the suffering of the saints. It was written during the second missionary journey when he was accompanied by Silas and Timothy in Corinth (**Acts 18**).

Theme:

This letter is about the judgment of God. He jumps right into subject in the first chapter and then addresses some correspondence between himself and the Thessalonians (**II Thessalonians 2:1**). Paul must have been very concerned with the brethren as he describes the imminent apostasy or "falling away" (**II Thessalonians 2:7, I Timothy 4:1**) that restrained the work and negated his own preaching and teaching.

Paul points out that the real enemy of the faith is the lawless one, and he would be revealed in their suffering (**II Thessalonians 2:8-10**). This activity of the "lawless one" could be the protagonists in the Jewish war against the Romans when the Temple was destroyed (70 AD). It could also be referring to the Roman emperors in general or specifically Nero (54-64 AD) and Domitian (96 AD). He also reveals that miraculous activity from the "man of sin" proves that even Satan and his angels can do amazing things. In fact, the Old Testament and the New Testament affirm that it is not just God's people who can work miracles or participate in the supernatural.

Audience:

The church of Thessalonica was the intended audience. Paul intended for them to prepare for the "day of the Lord" (**II Thessalonians 2:2**) which is an Old Testament expression first described in **Amos 5:18-20**. It is a day of darkness and calamity. He encourages the church to be prepared for a day like this when Jesus would return (**II Thessalonians 2:8**). There have been many "days of the Lord" in history and one need not apply this expression exclusively to the second coming of Christ (**Joel 2 & Acts 2**). This great tribulation may have taken place in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (70 AD), rather than the end of the world (**Matthew 24:15-35**). Clearly, Paul anticipated that these people would see a fulfillment of this prophesy in their lifetime.

Key Verses:

II Thessalonians 1:3, 1:6, 1:11, 2:1-3, 2:7-8, 2:13, 3:1, 3:6, 3:10-11, 3:14-15

Outline of Our Study:

LESSON #1 = Encouragement for the Church – Chapter 1

We Need To Focus On Spirituality (vs.1-4)

We Need To Forget Our Suffering (vs.5-8)

We Need To Follow The Saints (vs.9-10)

We Need To Fulfill Our Service (vs.11-12)

LESSON #2 = Enlightenment for the Church – Chapter 2

Look Out For Trouble, But Stand Together (vs.1-2)

Look Out For Temptation, But Remember The One True God (vs.3-4)

Look Out For Terror, But Follow The Truth (vs.5-12)

Look Out For Trials, But Be Thankful (vs.13-17)

LESSON #3 = Exhortation for the Church – Chapter 3

Be Compassionate In Prayer (vs.1-2)

Be Confident In Christ (vs.3-5)

Be Challenged In Your Work (vs.6-15)

Be Captivated By Peace (vs.16-18)



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LESSON #1 = Encouragement for the Church

Text: II Thessalonians 1

Introduction: We often get caught up in our daily activities until we are blinded to everything else going on around us. We get tired of waiting. We get tired of working. We get tired of things not going the right way. What do we need when we are tired? Encouragement! We need to remind ourselves about what really matters. For five weeks we considered the book of first Thessalonians. We talked about how to get ready, but what happens next? What do I do when I finally get on board with God's plan? We see the answer in the second letter to the Thessalonians. We need to STAY ready! How can we do that? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. We Need To Focus On Spirituality (vs.1-4)

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, ⁴so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.

II. We Need To Forget Our Suffering (vs.5-8)

⁵which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; ⁶since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. We Need To Follow The Saints (vs.9-10)

⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

IV. We Need To Fulfill Our Service (vs.11-12)

¹¹Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹²that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Please consider Virginia Brasier's timely poem entitled "Time of the Mad Atom" from the Saturday Evening Post (cir.1949). You may have your spiritual bags packed. You may know where you will spend eternity. But if you are ready, will you stay ready by keeping busy? Will you stay faithful by fellowshiping with the saints? Will you stop thinking about yourself and encourage others? Be a blessing to others. Glorify God with everything you do. Be an encouragement to others. Let's stay ready for the second coming!



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LESSON #2 = Enlightenment for the Church

Text: II Thessalonians 2

Introduction: Why do people say you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Is that true? Maybe that is because old dogs get tired of learning. Have you ever felt that way? The fact is that we never lose the ability to learn something new, which is what we will see in chapter 2. When we began to hunger and thirst after things that matter we can't get enough! We want to learn more. Last week we noticed that the church needs to be encouraged to stay ready. One of the ways we can do that is to stay enlightenment. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Look Out For Trouble, But Stand Together (vs.1-2)

¹Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

II. Look Out For Temptation, But Remember The One True God (vs.3-4)

³Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

III. Look Out For Terror, But Follow The Truth (vs.5-12)

⁵Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

IV. Look Out For Trials, But Be Thankful (vs.13-17)

¹³But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. ¹⁶Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, ¹⁷comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Conclusion: Please consider the illustration of Martin Luther about Bible study. You may have your spiritual bags packed. You may know where you will spend eternity. But if you are ready, will you stay ready by learning more about God's will for you? He not only wants to save you, but He wants to empower you with the Holy Spirit and with knowledge. We need to dig into the word of God. We need to grow in our spiritual walk. We need to communicate with God in prayer and read the Bible daily. Do you know where you are headed? Are you ready to meet Jesus? If not, make things right today!



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LESSON #3 = Exhortation for the Church

Text: II Thessalonians 3

Introduction: Why are you here on the first day of the week? Are you here to be encouraged or exhorted? Paul told Timothy to "*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*" (II Timothy 4:2). What does that mean? In this final chapter, Paul is going to exhort the brethren at Thessalonica to focus on at least four things. Each of these things will help them stay ready for the second coming of Jesus. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Be Compassionate In Prayer (vs.1-2)

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, ²and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

II. Be Confident In Christ (vs.3-5)

³But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. ⁵Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

III. Be Challenged In Your Work (vs.6-15)

⁶But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹²Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. ¹³But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

IV. Be Captivated By Peace (vs.16-18)

¹⁶Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. ¹⁷The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Conclusion: We need to get ready, stay ready, and wait for God to do His thing, in His own time, and in His own way. While we are watching the sky, and waiting for Him to call our name, He will begin to work on our heart. Do you know where you are headed? Are you ready to meet Jesus? If not, make things right today! However, you may have your spiritual bags packed. You may know where you will spend eternity. But if you are ready, shouldn't you try to take as many people with you as you can? There is still time to exhort others to get ready for the second coming of Jesus! What should you do?