

II Thessalonians: Lesson #53: The Coming Apostasy

Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children

For Sunday, Nov. 16th

Read II Thess. 2:1 – 3:18 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: II Thess. 3:3 “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”

An Apostasy Would Happen Before the Lord Returned

- Some people in Paul’s time were claiming that Jesus was about to return. We should always be ready for Him to return, but no one knows when that will happen. So we shouldn’t really listen to people who claim that they know when He is coming back.
- Paul explained that something had to happen before Christ returned. He called it Apostasy. That word means “a falling away”. It is talking about a time when many who had claimed to be Christians would quit following the Lord’s way. They might start believing things that weren’t true. They might start living sinful lives. Or they might just quit coming to church and worshipping the Lord. If these things happen to a person, they will not get to go to heaven.
- Paul seems to be telling us that before the Lord ever came back many people who had once claimed to be Christians would have fallen away.
- Since Paul’s time there have been many apostasies, many people have fallen away. Many false religions have started. Many churches have been started by men who don’t really follow the Bible. Many people teach things like evolution that try to deny that God is our Creator. Many people who grew up at least believing in God and going to church don’t really worship God any more.
- We must make sure that we always stay faithful to God.

About the Man of Sin

- Paul said that in time the man of sin was coming. We don’t know a whole lot about this, but Paul tells us several things about this person:
 - ⇒ He is against everyone and everything that people worship.
 - ⇒ Instead, he promotes himself as greater than all religion and over all religion.
 - ⇒ He is also called the “lawless one” because he does not follow God’s laws.
 - ⇒ That same lawless spirit was already around working in people’s lives even in Paul’s time.
 - ⇒ At some point the man of sin would be revealed.
 - ⇒ Satan will be behind this person using him to accomplish his purposes.
 - ⇒ This man of sin will appear to do miracles, signs, and wonder, but really they are lies.
 - ⇒ Because people will believe these things and because they don’t want to follow God’s true ways, they will be deceived by this man of sin.
 - ⇒ But when the Lord comes He will do away with the man of sin.

- Some of this is a mystery, but the most important lesson we learn is to always want God's truth. [Remember what happened to Eve.] Don't believe people when they teach things different from God's Word.

Deliver Us From Evil People

- No matter what time you live in, there will always be some good people and some evil people.
- Evil people do bad things to others, so we always want to pray to God to help us do what is right, help us not become evil, and ask God to deliver us from people that do evil.
- If we will work with God, He will stand guard over our lives and help protect us. We need His blessings to help us keep doing good things instead of bad things.

If Christians Don't Do Right

- It's sad, but sometimes Christians don't live the way they should. They start to do bad things.
- Paul calls this "walking disorderly". Those words described a group of soldiers that are marching, but one of them has gotten out of step and isn't marching with everyone else. Our lives might be out of step with the world, but we never want it to be out of step with God.
- Have you ever seen a marching band at a football game or in a parade? If the band director sees a member of the band marching the wrong way, then he will tell him what he did that was wrong. If he does it the next time, the band director will probably tell him sternly to get in step with the band. If that person keeps on being out of step, the band director will say he can't march with the band any more.
- If a Christian starts walking disorderly or out of step, faithful Christians should tell them what they are doing wrong, encourage them to do better, and then warn them about the danger of not doing right.
- After they've been warned, there comes a time when we must separate ourselves from those who walk that way. They can't keep being part of the Lord's church when they refuse to walk the way God commanded.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

The Day of the Lord Will Not Come Until the Apostasy

2:1-2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of the Lord and our gathering to Him: If you hear a report, or someone claims to have received a letter from us, or someone claiming the Spirit tells you that the Day of the Lord is about to happen, we ask you not to act hasty and let your mind become afraid and all shaken up.

3 Don't let anything or anyone deceive you about this. Because the Day of the Lord will not come until the apostasy (a time of falling away and defection) has come first and the man of sin, the son of destruction will be revealed.

The Man of Sin

4 The man of sin is opposed to all that is called God and he exalts himself above all that is called God and is worshipped. So he sits in the temple of God as evidence that he is God.

5 Don't you remember me telling you about these things back when I was with you?

6-7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already working. The only reason it is being held back right now is because of he who is restraining it. You know what restrains it right now. When that is removed, it will work even more and the man of sin will be revealed in his time.

8 And then when this Lawless One is revealed, the Lord shall consume him with the breath of His mouth and shall do away with him upon His coming and arrival.

9 The coming of the man of sin will be according to the work of Satan with all power, signs and wonders, but these will not be what they seem to be – they are false and deceitful.

Why Some Will Be Deceived

10 Among the people who are perishing this unrighteousness will completely deceive them because they refused to receive the love of the truth so that they could be saved.

11-12 And its for that very reason that God will send them this work that leads them into believing a lie. This way every person who did not believe the truth but was happy to live unrighteously will be judged.

Thankfully the Thessalonian Christians Believed the Truth

13 But we feel obligated to always give thanks for you, beloved brethren of the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning in sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of truth.

14 He called to you through the gospel so that you can obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 So, brethren, stand firm, and hold to what we taught you, whether by our words or our letters.

16-17 Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work, for He loved us and has given us eternal comfort and hope through grace.

Staying Faithful to God Among Evil People

3:1 Now as to the rest of what I wanted to write to you about, please pray about us. Pray for the Word of the Lord to run its course without any hindrance and be glorified, even as it has done with you.

2 Also pray that we will be rescued from evil people whose conduct is so out of place, because so many are not of the faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, for He will continue to make you stable and will stand guard to keep you from evil.

4 And we confidently trust about you in the Lord, that you are doing and will keep doing the things we command you.

5 So the Lord will make a straight path and remove all the hindrances so that your hearts can be guided into God's love and into steadfastly waiting for Christ.

Our Duty to Christians Who Walk Disorderly

6 But in regard to brethren who walk in a way that goes astray from and is out of order with the teaching we handed down to you, you must withdraw and separate from such brethren.

7-8 And you know why its right and proper to follow our example – because we never acted disorderly among you and we never ate anyone’s food without paying for it. Instead we worked hard night and day so that we wouldn’t be a burden to any of you.

9 As an apostle accompanied by other workers in the kingdom, we had the right to ask you for support, but since you were new in the faith, we were trying to set a good example for you to imitate.

10 For even while we were there with you, we commanded you that if any one was not willing to work, they should not get to eat.

11 Now we are reminding you about this again because we have heard that there are some among you there who are acting disorderly by not working at all. They are staying busy in everyone’s business except their own.

12 Now if anyone is doing that, we command and admonish by our Lord Jesus Christ that you get to work, be quiet (in other words, don’t run around talking and meddling), eat your own food (rather than expecting others to feed you).

13 But, brethren, don’t get tired of doing good.

14-15 But if anyone does not obey what we have said in this letter, take notice of that person and don’t be mixed up with them. If they see you are unwilling to be with them, they might take a look at their conduct and be ashamed. And warn them like a brother, don’t think of them like an enemy.

Conclusion

16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

17 This greeting from Paul I have written with my own hand, a sign to my readers which I use in every letter to prove that I have written it.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.