

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Epistles

August 6: 2 Thessalonians 1-3 (Ryan Ingle)

Sunday, August 6, '17 ~ 2 Thessalonians 1 - 3

It appears that only a few months passed between the first and second letters here. Paul starts the first chapter out by stating how well pleased he was of them as Paul, Silas, and Timothy would boast about them and how well they gave handled their persecutions and trials. He was also encouraged by their love for each other as it continued to grow.

Paul states that God's judgement will prevail on those who have wronged them when Christ returns in the clouds with his powerful angels. Those who do not know Him will be cast into everlasting destruction. "on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you." (1:10)

Paul states he continues in prayer for them in belief that all of what they do is for the Lord and done in faith for Him. The prayer is done in hopes the Christ will be glorified by their actions .

Ch 2

The Thessalonians needed this letter for clarification to Paul's original teachings and first letter again as there were false teachings being used to deceive them that Christ time of return was soon at hand. Paul makes mention here of the Antichrist returning before Christ comes back who will cause great deception of those who aren't firm in their faith for Christ. (I believe it isn't all that difficult to figure out which religion this will come from...) "He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." (2:4)

"And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time." (2:6) is answered by turning to Revelations 20:1-6 talking about Satan being chained for a thousand years so as not to truly deceive nations until he is unchained.

"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming." (2:8) This should give us as Christians great comfort knowing Christ is so powerful that a mere breath from Christ's mouth will overthrow Satan!

"...They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." (10-12) It truly feels like there are those who no matter what you may say to them, continue to believe a lie or argue with you regarding religion. They refuse to love the truth!! They delight in wickedness. All one can do is plant the seed and hope it grows through the thorn bushes eventually.

"So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." (2:15-17) Let's remember, even through our toughest trials we go through, it's not typically as challenging as was during this

time of the church being established. But even if it comes to that point, which could be very likely in the near future, remember Christ and the grace He has shown for us and the true example of love He had for each and every one of us.

Ch 3

Paul continues to ask for prayers as his work was very challenging dealing with evil and wicked people. He continues to encourage them that God is faithful and will deliver them from evil. He states he is hopeful they will remain faithful to the things he commands.

Paul finishes this letter by warning them of those who were idle and not working diligently in the Lord. He reminds them of how busy they were in teaching the message while they were there. They worked for their meals and even paid to eat while they were present to set the example for them. Some commentaries speculated that these idle members were already thinking Christ would return soon so they gave up their work so they would "be ready" for when Christ returned. "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."" (3:10)

Paul instructs those not willing to work to settle down from being disruptive and to earn the food they eat.

My question I would like to throw out here is, the beggars who stand on the corner saying they are homeless, do you help them by giving them money or not? :) I know this is speaking of those members in the church...

"Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer."

(14-15) This is great advice for us to follow but remember as it states in the tail end of these two verses, 'to warn them as you would a fellow believer'. We don't want to push them away but show love to them and concern for their spiritual being. They need love and proper reminders of God's will for them as part of Christ's body.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Ryan! I had the same thought about the panhandlers who certainly seem able-bodied, standing at the intersections. I remember one guy, years ago, who held a sign saying how hungry he was. We went home, Kathleen fixed up a plate of food, and we took it back to him. He just put it on the ground, in the dirt, and went on trying to get money. Stupid us, right?

There are many, many jobs out here, help wanted signs everywhere because it's so hard to live in this area with a service-industry job. And yet we have a large number of folks with Need Work signs, or Homeless Vets, or whatever.

Yes, we are to help our neighbors but I don't think it's a Christian ideal to be taken advantage of. I'm thinking that communities have programs in place to help the truly needy and I'm sure there are many of those. If you feel inclined to help someone, make a donation to one of those programs.

Replies:

Jamie Ingle:

Yes it's hard when your help is just tossed away but that will be counted against them as you are doing what God asked you to do. Not disagreeing with your suggestions just a passing thought.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Ryan!

Comment:

Denise Waits:
Anyone want to discuss God sending a delusion?

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:
You mean Jesus' meat breath?

Ryan Ingle:

I would love to but I'm not sure I could do it justice. I believe you also should take into account the first chapter in Romans where it talks about God giving them over to their own desires. The truth is out there and if people refuse to acknowledge it, what can one do? "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen."

Romans 1:24-25 NIV

There are people out there who just refuse to listen to sound reasoning for various reasons. I know why you are curious about this verse as I was thinking about it while I was reading and studying this myself.

Perhaps Charles Fry would like to add his thoughts on the meaning of 2:11.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Denise Waits, there is a precursor for the statement about delusion, that those deceived have no love for truth and prefer a lie. They've cut themselves off not just from God but even from consideration of truth. There are numerous examples of God giving people what they want, to their own detriment. Note the setup for crossing the Red Sea in Exodus 14:

Exodus 14:2-4 (NIV-WS)

2 "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. 3 Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." So the Israelites did this.

How was Pharaoh deluded, his heart hardened? By his greed to recapture the Israelites and the perception that they were trapped and vulnerable. This was an occasion of God "sending delusion".

In the wilderness when the Israelites grumbled against Moses and God, craving meat, God warned that he would give them what they wanted and lots of it, until they were sick of it.

Numbers 11:18-20 (NIV-WS)

18 "Tell the people: 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you wailed, "If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in

Egypt!” Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat it. 19 You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, 20 but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the Lord, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?””

That story actually turned out even worse when God "gave them over" to their own appetites, when they didn't believe God's promise and greedily gathered up enormous quantities of the quail on the first day of the migration.

This is what happened with Ahab in the story of the prophet Micaiah, (1 Kings 22). There was a lying spirit and false prophets, but the truth was presented, only to be rejected, preferring the lie. Ahab took the truth seriously enough to disguise himself, but he still went to battle, deluded.

This is what God does when people, nations, reject obvious truth preferring self deception.

Romans 1:18-19, 21-25 (NIV-WS)

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them....

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Ryan! I'm so grateful to have Paul's letters. Stand fast! Establish in every good word & work! Direct your hearts into the love of God! Wait patiently for Christ! Don't grow weary in doing good!

Comment:

Steven Dallas Thompson:

Great job.