

Lesson One

The Fear of End Times

Even though Christians look forward, through faith, to Christ's second coming, at the end times, there is a general sense of apprehension. Strong fears of unbelievers means the topic doesn't get much discussion. The end of one's own life is a topic a person prefers not to discuss. Yet it is worth studying and is appropriate to address at this time in the church year.

This three-part Bible study will lead you through a study of the end times and apply those facts to your daily life. We pray that you grow from this study, and your faith is strengthened.

Prayer

Dear Almighty God, we know that You hold all power and can do marvelous things. We praise Your name for your strength, justice, wisdom, and love. We pray that this study leads us to a clearer understanding of Your word and a faith that gives us confidence in Your promises. Amen.

Open His Word | 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

The Apostle Paul wrote a great deal about the end times to the Thessalonians. Let's take a look at one short section of his first letter to the believers in that city.

Read verses 5-7

- 1) Paul wrote in verse 5, ". . . and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God." What assurance do you have that this promise applies to you?
- 2) What is promised to those who are troubled?
- 3) What troubles do you suffer now that you think will be relieved? What kind of troubles do you expect to still come into your life?
- 4) *Job said to his wife [who told him to curse God and die because of his suffering]: "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:10).*

Paul wrote, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Based on these two quotes and others passages like them, what can you conclude about our earthly suffering?

Read verses 8-9

- 1) As a child did you ever hear the dreaded words, “Just wait until your father comes home!”? You knew that your father’s justice would be firm and sure. You probably also knew that the punishment was earned and deserved. According to verse 8, who is going to be punished?
- 2) Why is this a great comfort for believers and a terrible fear for unbelievers?
- 3) Verse 9 states that the unbelievers are going to be “punished with everlasting destruction.” It gives two clear examples of being shut out. What are those two examples?
- 4) According the verse 10, why are you included among those who will marvel?

These verses make it clear that salvation is determined solely by faith in Jesus Christ. It is also clear that unbelievers are going to suffer the most by being separated from God.

Apply His Word

- 1) This section of 2 Thessalonians makes it clear that a person’s actions are not as important as his or her faith. Since that is the case, why do people determine that the elderly and disabled should have the “right to die”?
- 2) How can a person who is disabled or dying still give glory to God?
- 3) How can one person’s suffering help someone else demonstrate their Christian faith?

As much as you might want to see an enemy suffer and die in eternal condemnation, your Christian love leads you to feel compassion for them. What steps can you take to demonstrate your Christian faith and love to those who are unbelievers in your life?

Conclusions from His Word

The end of our lives, like the end of time, holds elements of fear. God’s Word makes it clear that we don’t need to be afraid. We do, however, need to trust Him. When working with people who are approaching death, keep in mind the one thing that is needed – faith. Although other obstacles can interfere, stay focused on the will of God, and provide the spiritual guidance and assurance that is needed. God’s Word makes it very clear that a believer’s faithfulness is well worth it in the end.