



*I Thessalonians 4–5,  
II Thessalonians 1–3*

B R C  
Study the Bible  
and follow Jesus

NT #41 Bible Reading Class  
Pastor: Wentang Wang

Cerritos, CA

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## *A Bible Reader's Conviction*

- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training in righteousness**, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NIV )*

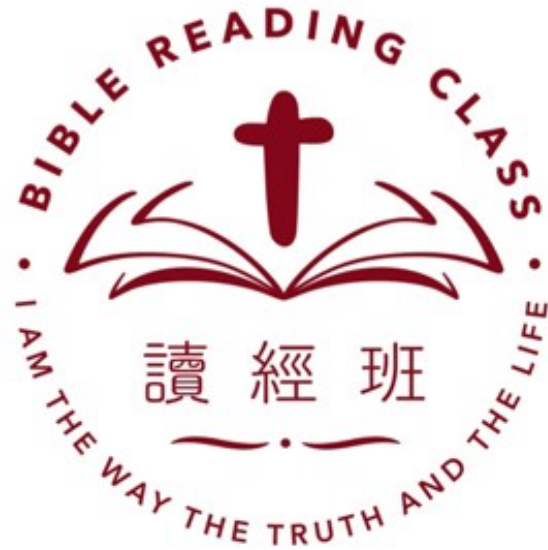
## **A Blessed Journey**

1. *May you study God's Word with a reverent heart and walk in His will.*
2. *May the Lord's Word flourish, and may He add to the church those who are being saved.*
3. *May the Lord bless your days of reading the Scriptures.*

## **Study the Bible, follow Jesus**

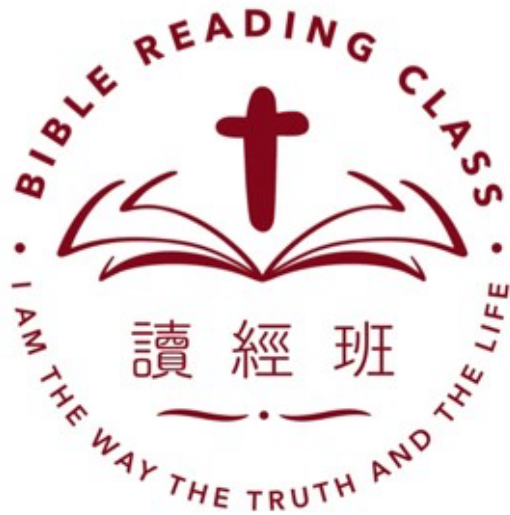


## The Guiding Principles of BRC



- Christ-Centered
- Bible-Based
- Mission-Minded

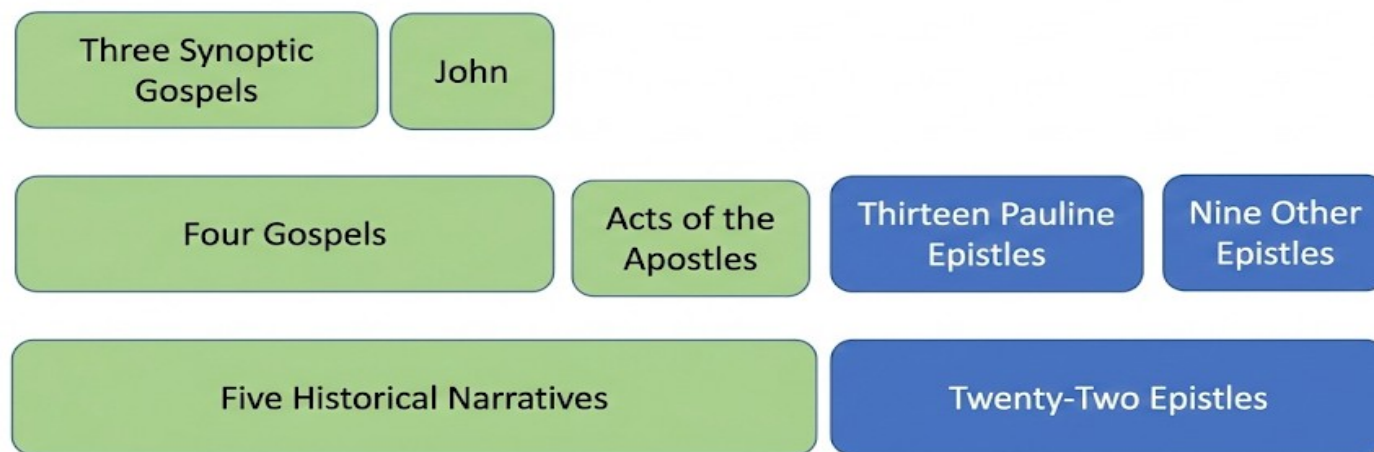
## BRC: A Gentleman's Agreement



- *I'll complete weekly reading assignment*
- *I'll watch weekly teaching video in its entirety*
- *I'll complete weekly quiz (closed book)*

## The Structure of the 27 Books of the New Testament

- *The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) John*
- *The Fourfold Gospel, Acts, The Thirteen Pauline Epistles, The Other Nine Epistles (General Epistles and Others)*
- *Five Books of Historical Narrative, Twenty-Two Books of Doctrinal Teaching*





# *I Thessalonians*

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## ***The Thirteen Epistles of Paul — Categories***

- *According to doctrine, Paul's thirteen epistles can be arranged into four categories in order: Salvation, Christology, Eschatology, Ecclesiology.*

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<b><i>Salvation</i></b>	<b><i>Christology</i></b>	<b><i>Eschatology</i></b>	<b><i>Ecclesiology</i></b>
1. <i>Romans</i>	5. <i>Ephesians</i>	8. <i>I Thessalonians</i>	10. <i>1 Timothy</i>
2. <i>1 Corinthians</i>	6. <i>Philippians</i>	9. <i>II Thessalonians</i>	11. <i>2 Timothy</i>
3. <i>2 Corinthians</i>	7. <i>Colossians</i>		12. <i>Titus</i>
4. <i>Galatians</i>			13. <i>Philemon</i>

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## **Thessalonica**

- *Thessalonica (Thessaloniki, also abbreviated as Saloniki or Salonica) was named after Thessalonike, the daughter of King Philip of Macedon and the half-sister of Alexander the Great. Her husband Cassander gathered the surrounding population, expanded and strengthened the area, and built the city of Thessalonica, naming it after his wife. The population of the city was predominantly Greek, and it contained a Jewish synagogue.*
- *This city was a major hub of land and sea transportation—bordering the Aegean Sea to the east, reaching Rome to the west, Athens to the south, and Asia to the north. It has stood for more than two thousand years and remains today the second-largest city in Greece, surpassed only by Athens.*

## ***Paul's Establishment of the Church in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–10)***

- *17:1 Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.*
- *17:2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*
- *17:3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.*  
*He said, "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah."*
- *17:4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of **God-fearing Greeks** and quite a few **prominent women**.*
- *17:5 But other **Jews were jealous**; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city.*  
*They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.*

## ***Paul's Establishment of the Church in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–10)***

● *17:6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting:*

*“These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here,”*

● *17:7 “and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.”*

● *17:8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.*

● *17:9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.*

● *17:10 As soon as it was night, the believers **sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.***

## *Persecution That Follows Like a Shadow*

● *“The believers immediately sent Paul and Silas away to Berea by night. But when **the Jews in Thessalonica** learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.”*

— *Acts 17:10, 13 (NIV)*

● *“For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches **suffered from the Jews** who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.”*

— *I Thessalonians 2:14–16 (NIV)*

# The Second Coming of Christ

● From a doctrinal perspective, the theme of 1 and II Thessalonians is “the Second Coming of Christ.” I Thessalonians 4:13–18 contains the teaching on “the Rapture”, and II Thessalonians 2:1–10 speaks about “the Man of Lawlessness.” Both passages hold a special place in the study of eschatology.

● I Thessalonians has five chapters, and each chapter ends with a reference to the Second Coming of Christ:

1. “...to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”

— I Thessalonians 1:10 (NIV)

2. “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”

— I Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NIV)

## ***The Second Coming of Christ***

3. “May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father *when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.*”

— *I Thessalonians 3:13 (NIV)*

4. “After that, we who are still alive and *are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.*”

— *I Thessalonians 4:17–18 (NIV)*

5. “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

— *I Thessalonians 5:23 (NIV)*

*Paul's Second Missionary Journey, 51 A.D.  
(Thessalonica was the 5th stop)*





**Thessalonica is  
the capital of Macedonia**



# Metropolitan Church of Thessaloniki (Greek Orthodox Church)

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## **Outline of *I Thessalonians***

- *I Thessalonians* is often called “the warmest of Paul’s letters.” It reveals the deep brotherly affection within Paul’s heart and carries an exceptionally gentle and intimate tone.

*Doctrinal teaching is not extensive in this letter; only 4:12–5:3 relates directly to the Second Coming of Christ. The main emphasis is on relationships and daily Christian living—practical, personal, and deeply relevant.*

*The book contains five chapters and can be divided into two major sections:*

- 1. First Section: The Minister and the Believers (We and You) — Chapters 1–3*
- 2. Second Section: Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5*

## ***First Section: The Minister and the Brothers and Sisters***

- ***Giving thanks to God for you — 1:1–10***

- *We give thanks to God for you, remembering you in our prayers...*

1. *The work produced by faith (regarding ministry)*

2. *The labor prompted by love (regarding daily living)*

3. *The endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (waiting for God with faith)*

## ***First Section: The Minister and the Brothers and Sisters***

- *You are chosen by the Lord, because...*
  - *Our gospel came to you not only in word,*
  - *but also in...*
    1. *Power*
    2. *The Holy Spirit*
    3. *Full conviction*
- *These three are all the work of God, moving people to receive the gospel; therefore they reveal that you are God's chosen ones.*

## ***First Section: The Minister and the Brothers and Sisters***

- *You became a model to all who believe, because...*
  1. *The word of the Lord has sounded forth from you*
  2. *You turned from idols to God, to serve the living and true God*
  3. *You wait for His Son from heaven*
- *Evangelizing, serving God, and waiting for Christ's return—these three are the marks of a genuine believer.*

## ***Defending Ourselves — 2:1–12***

- ***A necessary defense***

- *When God’s servants are attacked, they must defend themselves.*
- *The purpose of the defense is not personal honor, but the benefit of the believers.*
- *Jesus said: “**Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.**” When believers are still spiritually immature, some may take advantage of the situation and attack God’s servants. Believers may then be misled, and the church scattered. If persecution also comes at the same time, believers can easily be shaken.*
- *Therefore, for the sake of the brothers and sisters, God’s servant must defend himself, so that his credibility may be restored, and believers may again receive guidance, walk rightly, and live in a manner worthy of the Lord.*

## ***Defending Ourselves — 2:1–12***

- ***Paul's Defense***

- *Our exhortation does not come from error, impurity, or deceit.*
- *We are not trying to please people, but God, who tests our hearts.*
- *We never used flattering words—you know this; nor did we cover up greed—God is our witness.*
- *You are witnesses, and so is God, how holy, righteous, and blameless we were among you who believed.*
- *You know how we encouraged, comforted, and urged each of you, like a father with his own children, so that you would live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.*

## ***We Long to See You Again — 2:13–3:13***

- ***You are our joy (because you stand firm)***
  - *“What is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory before our Lord Jesus when He comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”*
- ***I sent Timothy to see you (because we were concerned about you)***
  - *“When we could stand it no longer... we sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage you in your faith... to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter had tempted you and our labor might have been in vain.”*

## ***We Long to See You Again — 2:13–3:13***

- ***Timothy Brought Back Good News***

- *“Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love...”*

- 1. We were comforted in all our distress and affliction because of your faith.*

- 2. If you stand firm in the Lord, we live (we are strengthened).*

- 3. We rejoice greatly before God because of you; how can we thank God enough for all this joy?*

- *Because Paul heard that the Thessalonian believers were standing firm in faith, he was (1) comforted, (2) revived, and (3) exceedingly joyful.*

## ***Marks of Spiritual Maturity***

- *A true servant of God does not care about personal honor or shame, but deeply cares about the faith of the brothers and sisters. The moment he hears that they are standing firm, he feels immense comfort and joy, and thanks God for such joy.*
- *What is the expression of spiritual maturity? It is not being emotionless, unmoved, or stoic. Paul was not like that.*
- *Paul was a man of deep feeling. His emotions rose and fell with the condition of the believers—sometimes anxious, sometimes worried, sometimes joyful.*

***“Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?” (2 Cor 11:29)***

***“We were comforted because of your faith... if you stand firm in the Lord, we live... we rejoice greatly before God because of you.” (1 Thess 3:7–9)***

## ***Marks of Spiritual Maturity***

*• A solemn face is not spirituality; emotional coldness is not spirituality; fake smiles are not spirituality. True spirituality has true emotion.*

*Jesus wept with those who wept for Lazarus; He had compassion on the crowds.*

*Paul also served with genuine emotion, warning each one with tears (Acts 20:31), grieving or rejoicing because of others.*

*• In today's increasingly superficial and worldly church culture, Christians often wear masks.*

*Behind the mask, the true self is lost; even when the mask is removed, the face remains a mask.*

*Jesus and the apostles show us what true discipleship looks like—authentic, sincere, emotionally connected. Rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep, showing compassion, and connecting heart-to-heart.*

## ***We Long to See You Again — 2:13–3:13***

### ***I Want to See You Again***

- *“We pray earnestly night and day to see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. May our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you.”*
- *God’s servants go out to do the Lord’s work. Paul longed to see the Thessalonians again to supply what **was lacking in their faith**—to build them up in the truth, so they may understand more clearly and stand more firmly.*

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- ***Obeying the Apostolic Teaching***

- *“Since you have received from us instruction on how to live in order to please God, do so more and more.”*

- *The apostles knew their teaching came from God; therefore they commanded believers to obey—firmly and without hesitation. When believers follow such teaching, they please God. Sometimes “politeness” comes from uncertainty. The New Testament is full of certainty—not “maybe,” “perhaps,” or “for your reference”—because the apostles knew their teaching came from the Lord.*

## ***Faith and Life, Chapters 4–5***

- ***Maintain the holiness of your body***

- ***“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.” (4:3–6)***

- *At that time, society was filled with sexual indulgence—just like today. Paul said, “**No one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister**” (NIV). According to the context, “**wrong or take advantage**” refers to sexual sin, and the violated party is “**a brother.**” In the New Testament, the word “brother” is commonly used to refer broadly to brothers and sisters in the Lord, which is why the NIV translates it as “brother and sister”, including both men and women. There are many forms of “sexual immorality,” and homosexuality is one of them. People in the church were still influenced by the moral climate of society. Paul exhorted them to avoid sexual immorality and maintain holiness.*

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- ***Live Quietly and Work with Your Hands***

- ***“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, mind your own business, and work with your hands... so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”***

- *Quietness means not gossiping everywhere; working means supporting oneself.*

*Some people only ask the church for help, refuse to work, and gossip everywhere.*

*Paul tells such people: **“Be quiet and work.”***

*The church’s love is for those truly in need, not for supporting idleness. If believers “live quietly and work,” they will have a good testimony and lack nothing.*

## *Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5*

- *About the Rapture of Believers*

- *“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him... For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven... the dead in Christ will rise first... after that, we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”*

- *Eschatology is a major theme of 1 & II Thessalonians—Christ’s return and the resurrection of the dead. The only passage in Scripture that explicitly teaches the Rapture is here. When the Lord returns, believers who are still alive will be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- *When Will Christ Return?*

*The answer is: we do not know. Only God knows the day and hour.*

- *“But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief... You are all children of the light... So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

- *How should Christians live in light of Christ’s return?*

*Paul says: **live your Christian life as usual.** We are children of the light, so we must “not be asleep” (not living like unbelievers), but be awake and sober (living faithfully as Christians), and—just as we always do—encourage one another and build each other up.*

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- ***Respecting God’s Servants***

- ***“Respect those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”***

- *How Should Christians Treat God’s Servants?*

*Christians should honor them! This is the “basic honor” that comes from the identity and nature of the work of God’s servants. In addition to this, there is also “special respect,” which arises from the fruit of their ministry and the love of the believers. Such honor and respect are pleasing to God.*

*Furthermore, because matters involving teaching and leadership can easily cause resistance or backlash, special attention must be given to maintaining peace among one another.*

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- *Matters Related to Christian Living*
  - *Different situations require different responses:*
    1. ***Warn the idle and disorderly***
    2. ***Encourage the fainthearted***
    3. ***Help the weak***
    4. ***Be patient with everyone***

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- *Matters Related to Christian Living*
  - ***Doing God's Will***
    1. *Rejoice always*
    2. *Pray continually*
    3. *Give thanks in all circumstances*
  - *For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- ***How should we respond when we hear God’s message?***

- *When hearing God’s message, we must not harden our hearts or quench the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Instead, we should examine ourselves: what is good should be kept, and what is not good should be stopped.*

- 1. Do not quench the Spirit;***

- 2. Do not treat prophecies with contempt;***

- 3. But test everything:***

- a. Hold on to what is good;***

- b. Reject every kind of evil.***

## ***Faith and Daily Living — Chapters 4–5***

- ***Body, Soul, and Spirit Preserved by God***

- *God’s servant blesses the believers, praying that God would keep their whole being:*

- ***“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

- ***Pray continually for God’s servants***

- *Paul often asked the brothers and sisters to pray for him, because doing the Lord’s work is a spiritual battle and requires the intercession of many. Believers should also partner with God’s servants through prayer.*

- ***“Brothers and sisters, pray for us.”***



*II Thessalonians*

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## Outline of II Thessalonians

1. *We thank God for you — 1:1–12*
2. *Concerning the Day of the Lord and “the Man of Lawlessness” — 2:1–17*
3. *Several matters related to Christian living — 3:1–18*

## ***We Thank God for You, 1:1–12***

• **Thanksgiving:** *For what should we thank God? For smooth circumstances? For a peaceful life? Paul thanked God for the faith and love of the Thessalonian believers:*

• ***Brothers and sisters, we ought always to thank God for you, because...***

1. ***Your faith is growing more and more,***

2. ***The love all of you have for one another is increasing,***

3. ***You are persevering and remaining faithful in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.***

## ***We Thank God for You, 1:1–12***

• ***Encouragement:*** *When believers suffer, they should not lose heart; instead, they should thank God, because suffering shows they are counted worthy of God’s kingdom. As for those who harden their hearts and refuse to know God, who reject the gospel, they will face eternal destruction—being shut out from the presence of the Lord and from His glory.*

• ***“All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering... He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”*** *(Everlasting destruction means eternal separation from God.)*

## ***We Thank God for You, 1:1–12***

• **Prayer:** *God's servants pray for believers—not for wealth or comfort, but that they may live lives worthy of God's calling, so that the Lord Jesus may be glorified in them, and they in Him.*

• ***We constantly pray for you:***

- 1. That our God may make you worthy of His calling,***
- 2. That by His power He may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith,***
- 3. So that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him.***

## ***Concerning the Day of the Lord and “the Man of Lawlessness”***

• ***Do not be easily unsettled:*** *No matter who says that the Day of the Lord has already come, do not be quickly shaken.*

• ***Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him, I urge you:***

1. ***Whether by a spirit (e.g., visions or dreams from evil spirits),***
2. ***Or by a word (e.g., false prophets),***
3. ***Or by a letter supposedly from us, saying that the Day of the Lord has already come—***

• ***Do not be easily unsettled or alarmed.***

## ***Concerning the Day of the Lord and “the Man of Lawlessness”***

• ***Before the Lord returns, the Man of Lawlessness will first be revealed: The “Man of Lawlessness” (The Lawlessness) is also called “the Son of Perdition.” Before Christ returns, he will first be revealed***

• ***“That day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the man doomed to destruction...” ( II Thessalonians 2:3, NIV)***

• ***The secret power of lawlessness is already at work, but someone is now holding it back (we are not certain who this restrainer is).***

• ***When the restrainer is removed, the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him by the splendor of His coming.***

# Concerning the Day of the Lord and “the Man of Lawlessness”

- *Characteristics of the Man of Lawlessness*

1. *Claims to be God:* *He opposes the Lord and exalts himself above everything called God or worshiped, even setting himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*
2. *Performs miracles:* *His coming is in accordance with Satan’s work—displaying all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders.*
3. *Deceives hearts:* *He uses every sort of wicked deception on those who are perishing.*

## Who Is the Man of Lawlessness?

### • *Speculations about the Man of Lawlessness*

1. *The Man of Lawlessness is the Roman Papacy: During the Reformation, reformers clashed fiercely with the Roman Church, and the idea that “the papacy is the Man of Lawlessness” became popular. But the Man of Lawlessness claims to be God, and no pope has ever claimed to be God. Also, “Man of Lawlessness” is singular, while popes are many. Even if one views the papacy as a system, it still does not fully match the biblical description.*
2. *The Man of Lawlessness is the personification of “the secret power of lawlessness”:  
This anti-God force appears in different eras through different individuals. In the last days, this force will appear one final time in human form—the Man of Lawlessness.*

## ***Needless Speculation and Arguments***

- *Whenever people discuss the date of Christ's return, the identity of the Antichrist, or the Man of Lawlessness, endless speculation and arguments arise. This is completely unnecessary!*
- *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever.” (Deuteronomy 29:29, NIV) Since Scripture does not reveal who the Antichrist or the Man of Lawlessness is, these matters belong to God. You are not God—how can you know what He has not revealed? Not knowing, yet still guessing—and thinking your guess is correct. Someone else, equally ignorant, guesses differently, and you argue. Why torment yourselves?*
- *Another phenomenon: Certain religious charlatans always appear during wars or disasters, using speculation and sensationalism to attract followers. If you follow them instead of Christ, your spiritual discernment is already compromised, and you will suffer the consequences. Why not humbly read God's Word and walk with the Lord? That is the path of blessing!*

## ***Matters Related to Christian Living, 3:1–18***

• ***Pray for God's servants:*** *Believers have the responsibility to pray for God's servants so their work may be fruitful and that they may be delivered from wicked people.*

• ***“Pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith.” ( II Thessalonians 3:1–2, NIV)***

## ***Matters Related to Christian Living, 3:1–18***

- ***Exercise church discipline***

- *The church belongs to God, and God is holy; therefore, the church must also be holy.*

*If someone refuses to follow the teachings and does not accept correction, church discipline must be applied—keeping away from that person (removal from membership).*

*The purpose of discipline is restoration. Even if someone is removed, do not treat him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*

- ***“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you... keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us... 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.” ( II Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15, NIV)***

## ***Benediction***

• ***Closing blessing:*** *A benediction declares that “blessing comes from God.” God desires His servants to pray for His people so they may receive His blessing.*

- *“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way.” ( II Thessalonians 3:16, NIV)*
- *“The Lord be with all of you.” ( II Thessalonians 3:16, NIV)*
- *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” ( II Thessalonians 3:18, NIV)*