SECOND THESSALONIANS (reprinted fromwww.insight.org)

Paul, worried about his friends and their troubles with false teachers, wrote this second letter to the believers at Thessalonica in the hope of encouraging their young but burgeoning faith.

Paul probably had received a second report from Thessalonica detailing continuing questions or problems regarding the end times. Some were deliberately misleading these new believers, even to the point of false teachers forging letters to make them look as if they had come from Paul (2:2) The apostle, therefore, took extra care in this letter to make sure they understood not only his views on the end times but also what his handwriting looked like, so they would be able to identify letters as authentically his (3:17).

The book distinguishes itself by the detailed teaching it presents on the end times. False teachers had been telling the Thessalonian believers that the day of the Lord had already come. This would have been especially troubling to them because Paul had encouraged them in his previous letter that they would be raptured before the day of wrath came upon the earth.

So, Paul explained to them that this future time of tribulation had not yet come because a certain “man of lawlessness” had not yet been revealed (2:3). But Paul encouraged the Thessalonians not to worry, because the Antichrist would not come until a mysterious restrainer was removed from earth (2:6–7).

Paul taught them that their hope in Christ’s future return should serve as an encouragement to them in their suffering, motivating them to live responsibly for Him. Paul always connected his teaching on Jesus with the practical growth he expected to see as a result of a deeply held faith.

Discipline and self-control quickly slip away in a society so focused on the material that its people forget the spiritual realities that should dictate their lives. Many people today have descended into an unruly and lazy existence that possesses little care for others, especially of the kind that might conflict with our personal, fleshly desires.

Paul knew that hope in Christ would encourage perseverance in godly living. And hope is exactly what we lack today, one of the great roots of this gradual slip into increased self-centeredness. Allow the words of this book to rekindle your hope and fan into flame your desire to live in God-honoring ways.

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