

# Thess 7

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us turn now to the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter 2.

And we'll read from verse 3. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except that come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

And so on through to the end of verse 12. Now, during the past number of weeks, in these two epistles, we've been studying particularly the teaching that we have here concerning the second coming of Christ, the second advent.

And we've noticed that the Thessalonian Christians were an easy prey to the people who tended to have wrong teaching concerning the second coming.

And wrong teaching concerning the last things, the doctrine which is theologically referred to as the doctrine of eschatology, the doctrine of the last things.

[ 1 : 50 ] They were particularly subject to the belief, that is the Thessalonians, that the second coming was not just imminent, but that it would happen immediately.

And we've seen that they were so caught up with this teaching that many of them stopped their daily work, their daily tasks.

And they just stood around waiting for this coming of the Lord. So in the two letters that Paul addressed to them, probably the two earliest letters that he wrote, he gives them needed counsel.

And in the counsel that is addressed to them, we derive our understanding of much of the doctrine of the last things, certainly the doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ.

They were, as we see it in the last chapter, in an agitated state of mind. We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or troubled, neither by spirit nor by word nor by letters from us, as at the day of Christ is at hand.

[ 3 : 16 ] What had happened here really was that these people had more or less lost their heads, with reference to the second coming. And they were a prey to every kind of suggestion that was made to them by the various false prophets and the pervers of false teaching who had come into Thessalonica.

And so he writes here to correct them and to give them a settled frame of mind regarding this thing and to be sensible with reference to it and recognize that the Lord expected them to go back to their various tasks and to engage in the next steps and to engage in the next steps and to engage in that spiritual activity of waiting for the second coming, to be ready for it, to prepare for it.

And that the best way of preparation for it, as we have seen, was to give themselves in a life of commitment to Christ and in the cultivation of a holiness of character in readiness for his coming.

Now, this chapter deals with the two great events which will inevitably occur before he comes again. And these are the falling away or the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin. Now, I would be the very first to acknowledge that there are problems and difficulties with an interpretation of this passage that I certainly would not even attempt to grapple with.

[ 5 : 00 ] We do know from the teaching of our Lord in Matthew 24, particularly from that teaching, that there are to be great events in the history of this world which will precede the coming, the second coming of Jesus.

There is, for example, the evangelization of the world. And this is a process which is developing steadily.

The world will be evangelized. People will hear of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the grace of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We also know that there is going to be a turning to the Lord of the Jews. Whether that is going to be a turning of the nation, as we understand it, of Israel, or the turning of Jews worldwide in the many,

many countries in which they are dispersed tonight is not very clear.

But what we do know is that there will be a turning of that people in faith and penitence to the Lord. And then we know that there will be the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition.

[ 6 : 24 ] Many people equate this person with the Antichrist, whom we read of in 1 John 2 and refer to in other passages in 1 John. And it is to the occurrence of the Antichrist, whom we read of in 1 John 3 and 2, in 2 John 3 and 3. And it is to the occurrence of these two great events that we turn tonight in considering, finally, with reference to the second coming of Jesus, the teach that we have in this epistle.

Now, he refers to this apostasy as a falling away, a falling away, obviously, from the faith.

Now, the problem here is determining when exactly this was to take place. If you look at it from the point of view of the Jewish nation itself, this prophecy was fulfilled within 20 years of the letter being addressed to the Church of Thessalonica.

Because the wrath of God was poured out, as we saw at the first epistle here, the wrath of God was poured out upon this people when Jerusalem was left in ruins by the forces of the Roman Empire. And when that first persecution broke out upon the Christian Church. Now, if there are many people who have said that that was the particular event to which Paul was referring in this passage.

[ 8 : 14 ] But we have to remember this, that the apostle here is connecting this falling away, this apostasy, with the second coming of Jesus.

And though there was in a measure a fulfillment of this prophecy in 70 AD, when Jerusalem was left in ruins, we cannot doubt that there is a further and a final fulfillment of this prophecy to be accomplished.

There is a tribulation still to come. And the tribulation to which Daniel refers, and the tribulation to which Jesus refers, and the tribulation to which the book of Revelation refers, to which is very closely identified, surely, to be a falling away from the faith.

It is an apostasy, a falling away from the truth of God. Now, you will notice, for example, that this is always what happened.

You see, if you go back to the Old Testament, God told the nation of Israel, He had told them for years and years that there would be a judgment upon, that He would come in judgment as a result of their falling away.

[ 9 : 55 ] And His plea to them through the various prophets was, Return unto me. But they refused to listen to this appeal.

And they continued to fall away. You see, they were falling away, and it was in the push of falling away that the message came to them, Come back, return to me.

They were falling away from God, from the worship of God, from the word of God, from the authority of God. And ultimately, God's judgment came upon them.

And they were driven away, or carried away, into the captivity of Assyria and of Babylon. And this is, if you think of this in the same way, you see, there is a continuing falling away from God, going on in the history of this world.

And to think in terms of the world being evangelised at the one time, and the falling away during that evangelisation is not inconsistent at all.

[ 11 : 11 ] I think that the picture you get in the Bible is this, that as this process of falling away develops, continues, So within that falling away, the gospel is proclaimed to people, and the gospel spreads, and the gospel has its triumphs, even in this period of falling away.

But you cannot get away from this, that there seems to be this teaching, that as the world develops, and as the world moves on in its history, towards the second coming of Jesus, towards the revelation of Christ, the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it moves towards that great event, so at the same time, the world continues to fall away from God, and from the teaching of the Word of God, and from the authority of God.

In short, and I hope that this doesn't startle or stagger you too much, in short, you can't get away from the picture that the Bible paints, the overall picture, that this world is getting worse, and worse, and worse, and yet within that progression, if you want to use the word progression, inverted commas, of a declension and degeneracy, the gospel will continue to be proclaimed.

And I think that that is a picture that we have here, that there is going to be a worsening of the situation, and as the situation washes, so the tribulation and the persecution of the Christian church will become worse and worse.

And indeed, Jesus says this, it will become so fierce that for the elect's sake, God will terminate it with the coming of the Son of Man.

[13:38] And of course, when you take that view, you have then to subscribe to this idea that we've been discussing some time ago in the Convocation Fellowship, that the thought of a thousand years reign of peace and blessedness and prosperity prior to his coming.

The pre-millenarianism position is a view which I feel is untenable in the light of the word of God. So, and furthermore, this abandoning of the faith will, and I think that this also is inherent in the teaching of Paul, quite explicit in many passages of the word of God, that it will not just be a falling away from the truth of God by the world at large, but the staggering and the almost unbelievable teaching of the word of God is this, that it will be a falling away from the word of God and from the teaching of the word of God and the authority of the word of God and the acceptance of the word of God by the professed, visible church of God in the world.

And I suggest to you that as you take an overall view of the world seen today ecclesiastically, that this is exactly what is happening, that the professed, the so-called churches, the so-called churches, the so-called churches, have departed and are departing from the acceptance and the teaching of the word of God in all its blessed authority.

and Jesus himself taught that this would be the kind of world situation into which he himself would come at his parousia, at his revelation.

There will be this apostasy. And I would tend to think of it in terms of a movement which gathers force with every succeeding generation.

[16:17] And I think that as you come to the end of the 20th century and you look back tonight from this standpoint to the end of the last century, you cannot escape the conclusion that the world is hastening towards this event or towards the climax of this apostasy, the climax of this falling away.

I know that every generation tends to look back and I think that if it is realistic at all we'll tend to look back and say that its generation religiously spiritually, ecclesiastically is worse than the previous one.

But who on earth would deny in the light of the teaching and the word of God that at the end of this century things spiritually, religiously, ecclesiastically are far, far worse than they have ever been.

There has never been a time I don't think in the history of the Christian church when it has been so boldly proclaiming its non-acceptance of much of the faith that is at the foundation of the church itself.

There has never been a time when the church has been so bold in its pronouncements contrary to the word of God and there has never been a time surely in the history of this world when people whose lives are lived contrary to the truth, in opposition to the truth, have been so bold to proclaim that their lives are acceptable and are normal.

[18:19] Society degenerates, ripens for the judgment of God and ripens for the second coming of Jesus Christ because the second coming and the judgment are to be contemporaneous events.

They will happen. The second coming will bring into effect the judgment of this world. And so Paul says to these people in the Salonica, look, the Lord will come but you remember this that before he comes there will be a falling away towards the final climax when the world is ripe and ready for his coming.

And that is why it is within that framework as we have seen he counsels, he advises these people, he pleads with them to live lives so that when he comes they will be ready because he's going to come with such suddenness and unexpectedness and such shock to the world that the vast majority of people are going to be overtaken by the very suddenness and the shock of his coming. so in that sense my friend this is why the Bible speaks of the world in which you and I live and the time which we live as the last days, as the last time.

the time of the coming of the Lord is at hand and you live in a world and you can't deny this, you live in a world that is hastening towards that coming and the signs of his coming are far clearer tonight than they were in the days when Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians.

[20:18] There were many then who thought that the signs of his coming were so clear that his coming was imminent. How much more so should you and I see the signs of his coming to show us and to prove to us that he will assuredly come.

The word of God cannot be broken. The second event that he speaks of here and this is the one of which we are going to find great difficulty is this one, the revelation of the man of sin.

Now this is an interesting word that Jesus here uses. There must come first of all a falling away and then that man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition.

Now we saw that there are two words particularly that Paul uses in these epistles to speak of the second coming of Jesus. The words are revelation and parousia.

Now revelation is the word that you have in your some have it in their ecclesiastical calendar, the epiphany. Now this is just Jesus, he is at the moment hidden from view.

[ 21 : 28 ] No one here tonight has seen the Lord. But what the Bible tells us is this, that when he comes every eye shall see him. He will be physically seen by us all.

He will be, that which is hidden will one day be revealed. Every eye shall see him and they who have pushed him. Then there is the word parousia. He is going to come and his coming, his presence will be really present in our midst as the seen Lord.

In the other words it's used of course the word apocalypse. Now this is another revelation that is going to happen. People are going to see someone else. They are going to see the man of sin, the son of perdition.

And I don't think you can get away from the clear teaching here that this is to be a real person. That the person who is at the moment unknown, you see there are various views as to the man of sin, the son of perdition and the antichrist.

And people are going to see the interpretations of this man of sin. But the one thing that is clear is this, that every single person will know who this person is.

[ 23 : 00 ] He will be revealed in the same way as every person will see and know the Lord Jesus Christ. so every person will see and know this man of sin.

Now, there are some who take the view that the man of sin is the same as the antichrist in the epistle of John.

Some of the other great theologian expositors think that the two ought to be distinguished. But I think there ought to be said for both views surely and this isn't just playing safe.

John, for example, when he spoke of the antichrist referred, tells us plainly in his own word, in his own epistles that in his own day there were many antichrists.

Many such were living in the days of John. Now, you know and I'm going to come to this in a minute and I hope that if anyone here tonight belonging to the Roman Catholic persuasion, if there are any such present, I hope that you won't be offended by one or two of the things that I am going to say because I will have occasion to refer to the Roman Catholic faith in the course of this sermon.

[ 24 : 15 ] And I don't do it to offend any such. I just do it in the light of what the Bible seems to teach us about that system together with other systems.

The point I want to make is this. you and I know that for example when I was inducted to this congregation when these elders were ordained and inducted here and the deacons, each office bearer in the Free Church of Scotland and another Reformed Christian churches subscribed to the teachings of the confession of faith.

and in that confession in chapter 25, section 6, there is an explicit reference to Antichrist being the Pope, the papacy.

and the question that some people ask is this, is it right to identify the papacy or the man of sin if they are synonymous with the Pope of Rome?

Now, the point I want to make is this, John you see said there are many Antichrists today.

[ 25 : 37 ] Now there was no Pope in John's day and yet there were many Antichrists. In other words, there were many people in John's day who came and opposed Jesus Christ.

They were the sworn enemies of the Christian faith. That is what Antichrist means in that context. Anyone who is against or opposed to the teaching of the Christian faith, they were there in his day. And they've been there in every day. And they are present with us today as well. Probably far more than they were in John's day. Many people who are not afraid to oppose the teachings of the Bible publicly.

Who are not afraid to deny the teaching of the Bible. So in a sense of Antichrist being a person who denies the faith of the gospel, there are many of them today.

There are many men of sin, many sons of perdition or sons of hell, who are motivated by the devil and by all the forces of hell, and who are bent on the destruction of the Christian church.

[ 26 : 52 ] church. There are many people, and you know this as well as I do, who would have no qualms at all to see every Bible and scourge and we butt on the biggest bonfire the town has ever seen.

People who would have no object to see every church raised to the ground, to see every Christian obliterated from this area and from the face of the earth.

They want nothing to do with the Christian faith, they have no truck with it, they don't accept it, and they are bent on its destruction. That is Antichrist. And there are, says John, many Antichrists in our day.

But you see, where the confession's teaching comes light is here, that there is another way in which you understand Antichrist. It is the person who is not just against Christ, but who sets himself up in opposition to Christ, sets himself up in the place of Christ rather, sets himself up in the place of Jesus Christ.

Now, whatever else we have in the Christian reformed churches, we have this, that there is, and you know that the history of the country to which you and I belong, the history of Scotland is rooted in this very struggle, the struggle for the supremacy of Jesus Christ as king and head of his church. [ 28 : 31 ] church. It lies at the heart of the reformation. It lies at the heart of the covenanting history. It lies at the heart of the struggles of our own denomination.

That the supreme head of the church in all matters ecclesiastical is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have no king but Jesus has been the battle cry of many people in this land for centuries. And you know, it is ludicrous in the extreme to water down the contendings of the reforming fathers and of the covenanters and of our own fathers.

It is ludicrous to water down their contendings and their struggles. My friend, this was at the heart of the struggle.

Christ alone is king and head of the church. Now, you know that there are other churches and other systems which do not have and who cannot make that claim whatever they say.

[ 29 : 54 ] when the pope visited Scotland I was asked to speak to someone about the proposed visit.

And I'm not going to identify the person, that wouldn't be fair. It's a connection with a radio interview. Anyway, after the interview, I got into a conversation with this person.

The woman was a Roman Catholic. And then there was the suggestion that the pope might visit Auburn. And I asked her, would she be prepared to go to Auburn herself?

Oh, she said, I would. In all sincerity, she said that she would. And I asked her, why? Well, if I went to Auburn, that would constitute the greatest day of my life.

Because then she said, I would see and hopefully I would meet the one who occupies Christ's place for me on earth. Now, there may be people present, I don't know, who would be prepared to challenge what I am going to say.

[ 31 : 13 ] And it's not based upon what that lady said to me, but it's based upon the whole teaching of that church. That undeniably, the Pope, the head of the Church of Rome, occupies the position of Christ's Vice Regent on earth.

He represents him in the world. And God, if you think that I'm moving towards this conclusion in the light of what the word of God tells us, that the man of sin who is to be revealed at the second coming of Christ, the son of perdition, who's working after the device of Satan, and the instigation of Satan, if you think that I'm moving towards a position which I'm going to say, that this man of sin is the Pope of Rome, all I would say to you and answer it, all I would say to you is this, I see no reason why accepting and knowing what we do know of that whole religious and ecclesiastical system at the head of which stands this man for whom now has been claimed for over a century papal infallibility,

I see no reason why. Having reached the stage which that person now occupies in his position after nearly 2,000 years of the history of that church, I see no reason why within that system that one man cannot develop yet in the history of the world to occupy this position when the Lord does come, the position which he has usurped to himself all the authority and all the power which belong supremely to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I see no reason why that position cannot yet be occupied by that one person and in that sense it is not wrong to subscribe to the teaching and confession of faith that he is the Antichrist.

But some may say if the Antichrist is a person who is opposed to the word of God, surely you cannot say that the Pope of Rome is opposed to the word of God.

[ 33 : 57 ] There are many teaching the word of God that he subscribed to as I subscribed to as a matter of fact. There are some teaching the word of God that the Pope subscribed to tonight that many leaders of Christian Protestant churches deny and deny publicly.

For example, the virgin birth of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus. There are many people tonight in pulpits throughout the land who even approaching the season refer to as Christmas when they will have so much paraphernalia and the churches deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and have taken the miraculous out of the word of God.

No, the Roman Catholic Church doesn't do that, you see, and neither it does. And there are many issues, for example, on the issue of abortion, on which the church would stand shoulder to shoulder with the Roman Catholic Church and part company with other so-called Christian churches who have become so weak-willed and have watered on the word of God that they don't know what to stand for.

Having said that, at the very heart of that system is a denier of the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, the sufficiency of the word of God as our only rule to direct us and to guide us, a denier of the permanent efficacy and value of the one sacrifice offered at Calvary, nearly 2,000 years ago, the mass is a denier of the validity and the permanent validity of one sacrifice once offered for sin forever.

And as such, I see no reason why we should shy away from our belief that he could be the man of sin, the son of perdition, the Antichrist to be revealed at the last day.

[ 36 : 20 ] On the other hand, you have to take this with you as well, that after Paul wrote this, the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition who was yet to be revealed, that within 20 years of writing this prophecy, and it is a prophecy.

Some of you may know, for example, that the American theologian B.B. Warfield, in one of his books, Theological Essays, has a chapter entitled The Prophecies of Paul, and there are prophetic utterances by Paul in his epistles, and indeed, the epistles of the Thessalonians have more of his prophetic utterance than any other.

Anyway, that's by the way. When he wrote this letter, the Roman Empire was in a position of tremendous power, and was usurping to itself more and more authority, and at this very time, was pushing the Christian church out of its centre in Jerusalem, was beginning to bring its persecuting zeal and power and iniquities power to bear upon the Christian church.

And moving towards that event in history, when it would stand in authority in Jerusalem, when it had taken over the temple in Jerusalem, and when the abomination of desolation would be seen in the temple, this day was fast approaching.

And in that sense, people have interpreted this passage as referring to the Roman emperor, who, having sacked Jerusalem, and having brought its persecuting seal to bear upon the Christian church, signal destroyed but failing, eventually had at its head a man who deified himself and who commanded that he would be worshipped as God.

[ 38 : 46 ] Now, in that sense, again, this prophecy has been partially fulfilled, that here you had the revelation of the Roman emperor, who had set himself up, not only in opposition to God, but as God.

When Paul wrote, we read this, he opposed and excelsed himself above all that is called God and that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Well, that happened in the very history of Roman empire and in the history of a Roman emperor who set himself up as the one to be worshipped, he deified himself. Now, he says, I told you these things when I was yet with you, but he says, and this is what is difficult, you know, he says, what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time, for the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let until he takes down to the way.

And what he's saying is this, at the moment he says, there is something which is keeping this man from being revealed. And some have interpreted that as meaning this, at that time, I hope you don't find this too long or too involved, at that time, the Roman empire was restrained really from exerting its full force and its full authority in the province of God strangely enough, by the Jewish state.

And, oh, the wisdom of the Almighty. It was within the framework of Judaism that the Christian gospel was being fostered and nourished, you see, in Jerusalem.

[ 40 : 38 ] And then when the Christian church was strong enough to withstand all the force that were brought to bear against it, it's as though God allowed the Roman forces to vent their full force upon the Jewish state, destroyed it, because the Christian gospel went strong enough to stand on its own feet.

it was pushed out and as it was pushed out so it took root and so the church took root and it grew. You see, the restraining inference was there, but when the restraining inference was taken away, then Rome would move in and the Roman Empire would sit on his throne and he would claim that he is God.

It has had partial fulfilment, but what he's saying is this, before Jesus comes again, there will be an almost similar occurrence, a similar development and whatever force it is within which this one person is going to arise, whether it be the Roman church and why not, whether it be communism or some other ism, it will be a system within which this man will emerge, and will have this worldwide authority.

And my friend, one other thing I meant to have said was this, when you think about it, and you know I don't talk about these things very often, when you think about the church of Rome and when you think about the ecumenical movement, when you hear people saying Rome has changed, oh the folly of such a statement, Rome is based upon, Rome is bent upon worldwide domination, it wants to bring within its fold, all the churches who are referred by it as their separated brethren, wants to bring them all in, be they the Eastern Orthodox Church, or the Anglican Church, or the Church of Scotland, or wherever, wherever you have people who are bent upon this union, this great ecumenical movement, what do you think the Pope has in view?

That he's going to become one of many? Oh no, my friend, he will always be the head of the Church, he will always be the Vicar of Christ, and it may very well be that as this ecumenical movement mushrooms, as it gathers foot, as it brings more and more under its wing, so the day is fast approaching, when the revelation will be made of this man, who is head over all, and to whom all must bow.

[ 43 : 42 ] This day is coming, and again I ask you the question, do you not think that we are fast hastening towards it?

Can you deny the one or two things I've tried to emphasize, that the world is getting worse and worse, that the mystery of iniquity is working, as Paul tells us in this very passage, the mystery of iniquity, whose coming, the power that emanates from Satan, with signs and lying wonders, performing miracles, ah yes, but they are false, they are not true, people will be duped into believing that what this system, whatever the system is, be it the Roman Catholic system, whatever the system, that they will believe the lie, and they will believe it because they haven't received the truth, that they might be saved, and again I would say this to you, that any religious system or any sect that comes into any community and does not accept the authority of the word of God, of the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, and the sufficiency of scripture, and Christ alone as saviour, and head of the church, any system which comes in and offers more, and suggests that it's more, is antichrist, unbiblical, unscriptural, and opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why are people carried away into the system of Jehovah Witnesses and Mormonism or whatever you call, why are they carried away? Because they don't receive the truth, that is why.

Isn't it staggering that in a town like storm away which has had the truth for years and years and years, there are people who are duped into an acceptance of a system or any system which is opposed to the word of God and to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 45 : 59 ] Why should we be afraid to say these things? And this is something else that Paul here tells us, that when people refuse to receive the truth and let this strike terror into your heart, when they refuse to receive the truth and refuse to love the truth and refuse to be saved by the power of his grace, God, he says in verse 11, shall send them strong delusion and they will believe a lie and they will all be damned because they do not believe the truth and because they have pleasure in unrighteousness.

you and I stand here tonight fast hastening towards the judgment seat of Christ. The truth is presented to you, Christ is offered, salvation is pressed upon you and if you continue to refuse it, this is what the Bible says, God will hand you over to strong delusions that you will believe the lie. In other words, there comes a time in the history of people when God gives them up to themselves. God gives them up to the hardness of their own heart.

Ah, you say, God has hardened my heart. Let me say this to you. He has not, but you have hardened your own. And where the hardening of God comes in is this, he hardens those who harden themselves.

Pharaoh hardened his heart and God then hardened his. People gave themselves over to sin and so God gave them over to sin. He left them. And when the gospel comes to you time and time again and it is pressed upon you to believe and you resist and refuse, do you not see the danger to which you expose yourself that God can get you over till you're deluded by the lie.

[ 48 : 07 ] And the lie very often is this, I have time enough, I will turn to God before I die and before he comes, my friend. How often has it happened that when that time comes you cannot even think about turning to God in penitence and in faith.

and then you are exposed to the damnation of the judgment of Christ brought upon all who don't believe the truth and who prefer to live in unrighteousness in a denial of the authority of God in their lives and to give themselves over to sin.

I ask you tonight, as I've asked you often, and as in the providence of God, I will continue to ask you, are you determined and are you prepared to continue giving yourself to sin and to unrighteousness when Christ pleads with you to give yourself to him and to turn to him in penitence and in faith because he comes to judge the earth comes he.

Now, I thought that I would sum up this address tonight but the time has gone, I can't do it. With the various teachings that we have here concerning the second coming that we've been studying for the past few weeks.

And I've said earlier on in the service tonight, I hope that you haven't found these studies too repetitive and too boring, perhaps too uninteresting and perhaps also not all that relevant to your situation tonight.

[ 50 : 07 ] I believe that these teachings are very relevant. I hope that they haven't been too repetitive and that you haven't found them too boring. And as I've had occasion to say to you so often in the past, I cannot but be encouraged by the fact that notwithstanding the theme that we study here on Sabbath evening, you continue to come to listen.

Oh, may God grant his blessing to you as you sit under the sound of his word and may God move your heart to receive him who speaks to you so often in the truth and reminds you that he's coming and you just remember this and I leave it at this.

You remember that one of the great teachings of these epistles is this, Christ is coming to judge the world and when he comes he will receive his own people to himself and he will take them into the immediate presence of God to serve him eternally with love and in holiness and in perfection and the rest he will condemn to endless perdition.

Oh, my friend, where will you stand? with whom will you be? We do not want tonight to start singing the praises of him who loved us and who gave himself for us.

Let us pray. Bless us, oh God, and guide us and lead us and direct our hearts in thy truth and help us to give ourselves to thee.

[ 52 : 06 ] We bless thee for thy great goodness and thy great compassion and for thy love for a lost world. Oh, do thou throw our hearts in love to thyself and forgive our sins for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. wisdom honest