



## A Kingdom-Centered View of the End Times

### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Community Reflection is part three of Vineyard Boise's "Weekly Discipleship Track." Community Reflection is intended to point you towards the unique interaction that happens in the face-to-face setting of small group life. You've processed the truth on your own in the weekly devotions and have heard the truth presented in Sunday's teaching. Now you have the opportunity to interact with other believers about the implications and applications of that truth. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another," says the proverb. That's exactly what takes place in the small group setting. Perspectives are clarified, truths explored, convictions sharpened (or softened, as the case may be), life is built. There are three segments in each Community Reflection: **Prepare**, **Process**, and **Participate**.



### PREPARE

(For leaders/co-leaders prior to group meeting)

1. Work through "This Week's Walk." Do the devotions, noting any key insights you want to share with your group or questions you would like to ask.
2. If you didn't have opportunity to explore the end times as a group when going through 1 Thessalonians, it's hard to miss it this time around. If you did work it through before to some extent, it'll be déjà vu all over again... To prepare for this discussion it would be good to read back through 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 as well as 1 John 2:18-27 and Revelation 13-20. You might also want to review the key eschatology terms and concepts again:

**Millennium** – literally a period of 1,000 years; specifically the 1,000 year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation chapter 20. How you interpret Revelation 20 and how you relate the millennium to Christ's return will determine whether you are *premillennial* (a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth which is preceded by the second coming), *postmillennial* (a figurative reign of Christ on earth which is followed by the second coming), or *amillennial* (there is no literal 1,000 year reign of Christ – it's just symbolic of Christ's victory over his enemies). Finally, let's not overlook the *panmillennialist* – this is one who believes it will all "pan out" in the end!

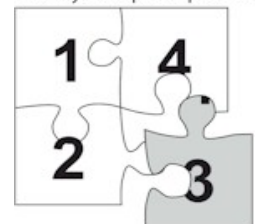
**Rapture** – a secret coming of Jesus just for the church (believers just vanish leaving the world in shock).

**Tribulation** – a seven year period of intense worldwide suffering which is believed to take place immediately before the second coming. You are a *pretribulational premillennialist* if you believe the rapture will take place before the tribulation which precedes the 1000 reign of Jesus following his second coming; you are *mid-tribulational premillennialist* if you believe the rapture will happen during the tribulation; you are a *post-tribulational premillennialist* if you believe the rapture will happen after the tribulation, prior to the visible second coming and the ensuing millennial reign of Jesus on earth (that whole *panmillennial* thing is sounding better all the time!).

**The Beast/Antichrist/Man of Sin/666** – an arch evil political leader that many believe will arise just before the return of Jesus. It is believed that he will be the cause of the tribulation and will finally be eliminated at the second coming of Jesus. Potential references are Revelation 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2.

3. Pray daily over your upcoming meeting and for each person in your group.

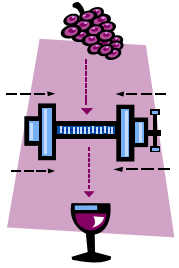
Weekly Discipleship Track



1. Life reflection – need for change, hunger for God
2. Presentation of truth – teaching and studying
3. Processing the truth – reflection and debrief in community
4. Life change – response to truth, new habits and actions

# Community Reflection

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## PROCESS

(For leaders/co-leaders during group meeting)

1. Ask your group how they did with their devotions this past week. What stood out as they worked through them? What questions or issues were raised?
2. Have the group read **2 Thessalonians 2:1-17** aloud together. Have group members work in pairs to answer the following questions, then come together and share your answers:
  - What does Paul say will happen before the Lord returns?
  - How does he describe the “man of lawlessness”?
  - What does he say is holding him back, and what will happen to him?
  - What is the point of this chapter?
  - What questions does this chapter raise in your mind?

After the paired group members share their responses to the above questions, pursue any of the following discussion questions as time permits:

- Why were the Thessalonian believers so shaken up about the second coming?
- How alarmed are you as you consider today’s headlines and current events?
- Which of the following best describes the effect of Paul’s teaching in this chapter upon you and why...  
(a) *Calming* (b) *Confusing* (c) *Alarming* (d) *Enlightening* (e) *Encouraging*
- How can a loving and just God send anyone a “strong delusion” so that they will be deceived and condemned? Can you think of any other biblical examples of this?

[This is a difficult passage! Be ready for some confusion and concern. If this question arises or you feel called to raise it, you might consider pointing to the examples of Pharaoh in Exodus (also Romans 9:14-24) and Ahab (2 Kings 22:1-28). Keep in mind that as the group leader your goal is not to solve the problem and iron out the difficulties, but to facilitate the asking of the question so that the group sees the teaching of the text and appreciates the mysteries it contains.]



## PARTICIPATE (As a group during or after your meeting)

Have group members pair up and take turns praying Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians over each other:

*“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loves you and gives you eternal encouragement and good hope, may he encourage your heart. May he strengthen you in every good work you do and every good word you say. Amen.”*