

2 Thessalonians Pastor Lou DeVizia

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Fellowship Bible Church; Woodbridge, NJ

Introduction: Here in Chapter Two Paul gets into what seems to be one of the chief reasons he wrote this second letter to the Thessalonian church: to debunk false teachings and assertions that the "Day of the Lord" had already come. This lie had spread and gained enough of a foothold so as to prompt Paul to personally deal with it in writing. It is likely that the false claim that Christ had already returned had fostered significant discouragement, and perhaps this created the idleness among some of these Christians that Paul addresses in Chapter Three. It is important for us to understand what is coming. It has an effect on how we live. We should be motivated to stand firm with Christ when we know that He will return for us. It also arms us with information with which we can warn others as we spread the gospel. So here we have teaching concerning some of the signs of the imminent coming of Jesus Christ for His church at the "Rapture" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

1. Verses 1-2 - The Issue Identified

- v.1 - When **Jesus Christ** comes, He will gather His servants to Himself.

- v.2 - Don't be **shaken** or **troubled**, for He has not come yet. Paul had taught them in person and in writing concerning the coming of Christ, but others had come and falsely taught that the **day of Christ had** already **come**, even going so far as to falsely attribute this teaching to Paul. So the writing here in 2 Thessalonians 2 is to correct this heresy.

2. Verses 3-4 - The "Falling Away" and the Revealing of "Antichrist" Precedents to the "Day of the Lord"

- v.3a - **Let no one deceive you...** We have an obligation to know the truth - the truth is inoculation from deception!

- v.3b - Two things that precede Christ's coming to gather the Christians: 1) the **falling away** - this is a conscious departure from a professed but not genuine faith in Jesus Christ, and it is a sobering reminder about the importance of understanding real, biblical Christianity, salvation by faith, spiritual rebirth, and the producing of fruit in keeping with it; apparently, there will be great numbers of professing believers who depart from their profession in those last days before Christ comes. And 2) the **man of sin is revealed**; also called the **son of perdition** (perdition = destruction - this speaks of the **man of sin's** ultimate destiny); this is the "prince who is to come" from Daniel 9:26, and the "beast" of Revelation 13 - he is most commonly known as the "Antichrist" though Paul does not use that term here.

- v.4 - The Antichrist's work will be characterized by great idolatry and blasphemy, even establishing himself as the object of worship in the **temple of God** (here a reference to the actual temple in Jerusalem, which still existed in Paul's day, and amazingly is part of end-times prophecy (i.e., it will be rebuilt one day!).

3. Verses 5-8 - The Emergence of "Antichrist" Circumstances Surrounding This

- v.5 - Evidence that Paul had taught on this in person previously and that the Thessalonians were wavering.

- v.6 - Paul had taught them who or what was restraining Antichrist's emergence. He does not restate it here.

- v.7 - **The mystery of lawlessness is already at work** - even before Antichrist emerges, you can see professing Christians deceived by many strange doctrines and practices, worldliness and fleshly lusts, selfishness and pride, and you see and hear of Christians falling into grievous sin from time to time and even departing from the faith. All of this is just a little taste of what is coming when Antichrist emerges - remember, a great falling away is coming. **He who now restrains** will be **taken out of the way...** Though Paul does not state specifically what he is writing about, it is reasonable to assume that the divine power of God, perhaps in the presence of the Holy Spirit living in the truly born again, is the only thing that could possibly restrain power of Antichrist.

- v.8 - **...whom the Lord will consume ...and destroy** - Just as the great falling away and the emergence of Antichrist are certain, so is his destruction, at the Lord's **coming**.

4. Verses 9-12 - The Works of Antichrist To Lie and Deceive

- vv.9-10 - A description of Antichrist's works; he will: 1) have **power** (i.e., supernatural strength), 2) perform **signs** and **wonders** (false, **lying** ones meant to deceive - just as Jesus and His Apostles performed miracles to verify His truth, so Antichrist will, in the power of Satan, perform signs and wonders to persuade people for deception and error) and 3) deceive - note Paul calls it **unrighteous deception** - Antichrist will lure people into lives of unrighteousness, undoubtedly people who will think they are serving God by doing so (thus "deception" - compare this to Matthew 7:21-23). All of this will be to lure people to the worship and service of himself. And will succeed in deceiving many because so many have not received **the love of the truth**. But Jesus Christ will destroy him in the end.

- vv.11-12 - Perhaps the most eye-opening aspect of all of this is that **God will send** those who did not receive the love of the truth (v.10) **strong delusion** - that is, God Himself will ensure that people who love lawlessness and have **pleasure in unrighteousness** (all of which is an expression of pride) are deceived by Antichrist's lie and share in his judgement and condemnation. Compare this to Romans 1:24-25.

Conclusion: The Lord has not returned yet, but he surely will. And there is great trouble coming on the earth. It is essential that you and I stay awake and alert and stay very humble at heart and close to God through Jesus Christ.