

“Lets Talk About Eschatology” 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Take your Bible and turn to Paul’s second letter to the saints in Thessalonica, 2 Thess., 2 and v.1. We will read through to v.12.

This is our third installment in the series on eschatology and it is more than just a way for me to fill up another Sunday sermon slot. The Spirit put this on my heart, and I am doing my best to rightly divide the word of truth concerning the study of last things. As you will hear later, I have changed my mind on one matter.

It’s important that I remind you of something Capt Obvious would love and that is, this letter was written almost 2,000 years ago. That’s going to play an important role in our study of this passage. **Their present is our past** so when the rumor was making the rounds that the day of the Lord has come, the rumor was talking about the day of the Lord being at that time.

^{NAU} **2 Thessalonians 2:1** *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,*
² *that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*

³ *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,*

⁴ *who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

⁵ *Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?*

⁶ *And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.*

⁷ *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

⁸ *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*

⁹ *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

¹⁰ *and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

¹¹ *For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,*

¹² *in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (2 Thess. 2:1-12 NAU)*

Lets talk about our composure.

This past Friday morning Beverly and I had breakfast with David and Phyllis Gales and we talked about a lot of different things including how upset David got the other night watching the vice presidential debate between Vice President Mike Pence and Joe Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, and how upset I got trying to watch the Presidential debate between Trump and Biden. I couldn't watch Trump and Biden for more than a few minutes and had to change channels to find old cowboy movies starring men like John Wayne and Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea. Phyllis had to tell David to "calm down" he was getting so upset, so David found The Andy Griffith Show to get his mind and emotions off the debate. Phyllis was quoting a young man from Plaza Baptist Church who was constantly telling his fellow Sunday School classmate to calm down. They laid that young man to rest yesterday at Plaza, by the way. And thankfully, David heeded the voice of his wife.

That's how I read what Paul wrote to the saints in Thessalonica. He was telling them to calm down.

I Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a

message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

You may remember from this passage in its context that there were people going around telling the churches that Jesus had already returned and that they had missed Him. That would be worse than watching Trump and Biden or Pence and Harris. That would have been enough to shake anyone's faith if one believed it.

And, beloved, there are people today and always have been people associated with the church who lose their composure when they see events that they believe signal the imminent return of Christ. There is nothing to get so upset about, for those who are in Christ.

Here's an illustration from the gospel of Luke chapter 21, Luke 21 and v. ²⁵ *"There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,*

²⁶ *men fainting from fear and **the expectation** of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Lk. 21:25-26 NAU)*

The fear of the coming horrific events will be enough to cause people to faint on account of the expectation of the things which are coming on the earth. Not the events themselves, but the mere expectation of the events.

Think about it. Meteorologists around the world will be reporting on the most bizarre weather patterns mankind has ever witnessed. News anchors and eye-witness news teams will have live shots of a world in turmoil. I would guess that in those days no one will see meteorologists standing in the breakers along the coast giving live updates on the killer storms blasting the shores. People in Charlotte, N.C., will be watching news reports from around the globe informing them of the impending doom that is coming on the earth. And, beloved, the church, as I read Scripture, will not be here to go through all those disasters.

So, we know Jesus hasn't returned yet so we can ignore the Jehovah's Witnesses who have been deceived into believing He has.

Calm down.

Lets talk about the day of the Lord.

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,

² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

2,000 years ago some false teachers or prophets had been spreading rumors that the day of the Lord was present then. They were saying that the day of the Lord was a present reality. And if you're wondering why I say that, this is why.

Notice the phrase, "*the day of the Lord has come.*" The verb "has come" is present tense and means that the day of the Lord was now, to the Thessalonians. When Paul wrote this letter 2,000 years ago, the false teachers were saying that the day of the Lord is now, today, it has already come and is here right now. They were not saying that the day of the Lord has come and gone as I have erroneously said over the last two weeks, they were saying "today is the day of the Lord." But being that no one in Thessalonica had seen Him, they were totally confused. It's no wonder they were so bent out of shape. And that explains why Paul said this to the church, ⁵ *Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? (2 Thess. 2:5 NAU)*. You should know that the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first.

³ *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,* It has been 2020 years since the birth of Christ and the apostasy hasn't come yet. So calm down.

Lets talk briefly about the deception that precedes the apostasy.

Now notice v.3, 2 Thess. 2:3,

³ *Let no one in any way deceive you,* Beloved, this letter was written 2,000 years ago but it is the timeless word of God. It was written and preserved for Eastway Baptist Church in the year 2020.

Let no one in any way deceive you

No matter how popular a false teacher or a false prophet may be, do not let him or her deceive you into believing anything they say about the return of the Lord Jesus or anything else for that matter. False preachers can twist Scripture in such a way that they can sound totally orthodox. **False teachers can and will teach some truth, but it will be wrapped in what is false. Wrapping what is false in the wrappings of truth makes it easier for them to sell their lies.**

It reminds me of when we use to buy fish at the fish market and the man behind the counter would wrap the fish in old newspaper. It may have been wrapped in truth, but it still stunk.

And, honestly folks, the false teachers of our day aren't even bothering to try to disguise their damnable heresies. They say things like "without us, God is no more than an idea, a concept." That's a quote from Steven Furtick. Or, "I'm as much an incarnation of God as Jesus was." That from the late Kenneth Hagin, the mentor of Kenneth Copeland who has said with a grin on his face, "When I read in the Bible where Jesus says 'I am,' I just smile and say, 'I am, too.'"

These deceivers are building up a great following in order to prepare the way for the apostasy and Antichrist and his beast and false prophet in order that the deceived might worship the beast and the statue that he's going to bring to life. ¹⁵ *And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Rev. 13:15 NAU)*

Finally, "lets talk about the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction."

I have put together from our text several characteristics of this man:

First, he is a man, a real human being.

Second, he is possessed by the devil.

Third, he replaces God as the world's object of worship.

Fourth, he will be the most powerful human being on the planet.

Fifth, he will be god-like in his powers to do signs and wonders and to give the breath of life to a statue.

Sixth, he will be “the” head of a one-world government; he will be the most popular politician on Earth. So, we know he isn’t Donald Trump.

But what about those words, “lawlessness” and “perdition” or “destruction?” What do they mean? I’m glad you asked that question. Here’s what they mean.

You will have either “lawlessness” or “sin” in your version of the Bible and both are saying the same thing. The apostle John tells us in his first epistle that lawlessness is sin. And our verse is telling us plainly that this man will be given over to sin of all kinds. He will be “of sin,” as though that sums him up in a nutshell. He will practice every vile practice that strikes his fancy and there will be no one to tell him otherwise. We have psych wards full of people like that now, not as fully given to sin as this man will be, but similar in certain areas of their lives. Jim Jones of the cult the People’s Temple was like that.

And what about the “son of destruction?” Again, your Bible may have “perdition,” but it means destruction. And it’s being applied in our text in two ways.

The NIV gets it right. He is a man whose end is destruction, that’s his doom. He is an of-destruction-kind-of-man. Destruction is his God-ordained end. But it isn’t destruction in the sense that we normally think of destruction, his will be an everlasting destruction, a destruction that has no end; it will be eternal. **Revelation 19:20** *And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (Rev. 19:20 NAU)*

Revelation 20:10 *And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*
(Rev. 20:10 NAU)

And the second way he is the man of destruction is destruction modifies everything he does. He is a man who destroys everything that displeases him. So why wouldn't the world choose to follow him? It's either his way or be murdered. And that explains why billions of people will gladly take the mark of the beast.

And with apologies to the late Paul Harvey, "now for the rest of the story." I leave you this morning as I left you last week with a word of comfort and hope. **2 Thessalonians 2:13** *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.* (2 Thess. 2:13 NAU) And as I like to say, **"once chosen, always chosen." "Once saved, always saved." "Once sanctified, always sanctified."**

No matter how strong and how loud the voice of the Antichrist may be, for us the voice of the Good Shepherd is louder and stronger. In Jesus' name, amen.