

**The Coming Antichrist**  
**2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**  
**Part 5**

Have you ever shared the gospel with an individual, repeatedly over a long period of time, who would tell you that they believed what you were sharing with them was true, but that they were not ready at that time to make a decision? This is not so terribly uncommon.

It is very common for people to know what is right, to know what is true, but are unwilling to act in accordance with that knowledge. Though most everyone believes that regular exercise is good, very few adults make time for it in their schedules. They say they are too busy. Or they say that exercising by themselves is boring. Or they may say that it is just too much work. The consequences for not acting in accordance with what they know to be true can certainly be significant. Their quality of life will suffer, perhaps even the length of their life. But the consequences of avoiding physical exercise pales in comparison to the potential consequences of choosing not to act in regard to spiritual truth.

We will see this demonstrated for us this morning as we continue to examine **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**. You will remember that the Thessalonians had been taught by Paul that they were not destined for wrath. This is very clearly stated in **1 Thess. 5:9**, **“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”** This meant to the Thessalonians not only that they would not experience the fires of hell, but that they also would not experience that future period of judgment that was coming upon the earth known as “the day of the Lord.” They apparently were led to believe by Paul that they would be raptured before this time of wrath.

Through some false teachers who represented themselves as speaking for Paul, they became confused and actually began to entertain the thought that they were presently in that period of time known as the “day of the Lord.” And this caused them to become fearful.

We certainly could be very much like them. Though we believe that we are not destined for wrath, if we are not careful we could become confused. Certainly this was the case with the Thessalonians and it could become true of us as well if we do not avoid certain things.

We need to avoid deception (VV. 1-2). **“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, (2) that you may 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.”** They had believed that they would be raptured, that they would be gathered together to be with Christ and thus avoid that time of wrath known as the “day of the Lord,” but they had become disturbed. They had begun to entertain the thought that the “day of the Lord” had come. They were in the process of being deceived. If we are going to avoid becoming fearful concerning future coming judgments, then we need to be alert and avoid deception. They would have been much better able to avoid being deceived if they had avoided becoming forgetful.

We need to avoid forgetfulness (VV. 3-5). **“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the day of the Lord) will not come until 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?”** Notice this last verse, **“Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?”** They were able to be disturbed by certain false teachers because they had become forgetful.

What had they forgotten? They had forgotten that the apostasy had to come first. And when would this revolt, this rebellion, this apostasy take place? It would be when the “man of lawlessness” or in other words the “antichrist” was revealed, uncovered or unveiled. We have learned that the antichrist will make a covenant with the many at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel according to **Daniel 9:27**, but this is not the revealing. This is not the apostasy. If the covenant is not the apostasy, then when would it be? It will be in the middle of the 70th week of Daniel or in other words 3.5 years after the tribulation begins. This is when **Daniel 9:27** tells us that the antichrist puts a stop to the sacrifice and grain offering. Why would he do such a thing? It is because he has another agenda and that agenda will be that he will be worshiped as God. Look again at **2 Thess. 2:4**, **“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.”** The Thessalonians had been taught that the apostasy, the revealing of the “man of lawlessness,” the exalting of himself as God in the temple had to take place before the day of the Lord began. Therefore since the Thessalonians had witnessed none of these things they were not in the day of the Lord. Paul is not satisfied just to remind them of what he had taught, he now goes on to give them more information. If we are going to avoid becoming fearful of future impending judgments and the prospects of experiencing the wrath of God in whatever form it might take, we not only need to avoid being deceived, avoid becoming forgetful, but also avoid ignorance.

In **VV. 6-10** he gives to the Thessalonians more information. **“(6) And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may 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.** Paul tells the Thessalonians that the revealing of the antichrist is now being restrained. This restraining ministry I believe is most likely the Holy Spirit.

Then we learn about his destruction. **“And 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.”**

He also shares with them information about the source of the antichrist’s power. **“(9) That is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.”**

But as we look further and consider **VV. 10-12** we see his power being particularly effective in

deceiving the unsaved. **“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) And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, (12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”** This morning we are not so much looking at the power of the antichrist, but rather his power over the lost.

### POWER OVER THE LOST

Yes the antichrist will come and display great power and will be extremely effective at deceiving people. But not just any people, those who are on the path of destruction. Let us go back and put **VV. 9-10** together. **“That is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity (energy) of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish.”** **“Those who perish”** denotes a class of people who are now on the path that leads to ruin. This same class is mentioned in **1 Cor. 1:18**, **“For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness.”** The reference to those **“who perish”** in **V. 10** is the same group of people who are referred to in **1 Cor. 1:18** as **“those who are perishing.”**

There is a very likely possibility that there are people here this morning who are in the process of perishing. We learn from the passage that there will be people in the tribulation who are also on this same path. Those people who are on this path, whether in this age or in the age to come, during the time period that we call the tribulation will be totally vulnerable to the antichrist and his deceptions of wickedness.

How did they come to be in such a terrible situation? How did they come to be so vulnerable to this coming antichrist? Where does the blame lie? It lies totally with themselves. Look at the very next phrase, **“because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”**

Who do we blame for those who perish? The blame for this condition is placed solely at the feet of those who perish. Why? Because they do not receive the love of the truth.

Notice it does not say because **“they did not receive the truth.”** It does not say that. Rather it says they did not receive the “love” of the truth. Why is this so important to understand? It is important because it communicates very clearly to us that giving mental assent to the truth is not enough. It does not say “and with all deception of wickedness for those who perish because they did not receive the truth.” It says the **“love of the truth.”**

Does this mean that I could believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he came to the earth, and died for our sins, was buried and ascended to the right hand of the Father and is presently offering the gift of life and not be saved? That is exactly right. It is not enough to “know the truth” we must love the truth.

This might be better understood when we read **John 3:16-21**, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that**

**the world should be saved through Him. (18) He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**” Up to this point you might say, “I don’t see your point.” In fact, everything that I have read could easily support the thought that all one has to do to be saved is to believe the facts about Jesus, but let us continue to read. **(19) “And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. (20) For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”** Those who are on the path of destruction are classed as a group in **2 Thess. 2:10** as those **“who perish.”** They are in this class because they have failed to do what? **“Love the truth.”** Rather than wanting to walk in the light they have chosen to walk in darkness and to believe the lie.

Are there people like that here this morning? Very likely there might be. Is there hope for you? Of course there is. The hope is this; that you, through the ministry of the Spirit working through the Word of God, see your condition and would come to the point where you would hate your sin and turn to Christ for salvation. Desiring no longer to be the person you are but the person that the Lord Jesus would want you to be.

Yes there is hope for those who are here this morning who have never received the love of the truth and demonstrated that by humbling themselves before Jesus as their Lord and Savior and have not purposed to live their lives pleasing to him. You can make that decision to turn. But what happens if you refuse to respond? Then I have for you a warning. The Lord may eventually give you up. Those who choose to not respond to truth, demonstrating a lack of love for it risk a supernatural hardening and therefore ultimate damnation (Ex. 9:12; Is. 6:8-11; Rom. 1; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

You remember in **Exodus 9** how it says repeatedly that Pharaoh hardened his heart. But then what do we read in **Ex. 9:12? “God hardened Pharaoh's heart.”** If we continually harden ourselves to the truth of God then it is quite possible that God will judicially harden us.

This same thing happened to the nation of Israel. Israel had sinned repeatedly; choosing not to love the truth. After centuries of this total disregard to the truth of God’s word shared with them through His prophets, he commissions Isaiah and says to him in **Isaiah 6:8-11, “then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me! (9) And He said, “go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’ (10) Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, and Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.” (11) Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered, until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people, and the land is utterly desolate.”**

Is God still in the business of doing this? And the answer is of course, yes! In **Romans 1** we see this. In this passage of Scripture Paul is talking about individuals who are continuously rejecting truth about God which is evident in creation. And in talking about them he spells out the

consequences to them not responding to that truth but continuing on in their unrighteousness. Three times in **Romans 1** it says that God “**gave them up.**” We see this in **VV. 24, 26, and 28.**

This is a terrible thing to pass the point of no return. It is a terrible thing when perishing people who refuse to embrace the love of the truth will be, through an act of God himself, unable to see the truth any longer.

And this very thing will continue on into the 70th week of Daniel. Look at **2 Thess. 2** again and let us read **VV. 10-12**, “**And with all deception of wickedness for those who perish** (or who are in the process of perishing), **because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (11) And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false (12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.**”

## CONCLUSION

The Thessalonians had believed that they would be raptured before the day of the Lord. But certain false teachers had come and represented themselves as speaking for Paul and had confused the church. The church had begun to become fearful that they were even then in the day of the Lord and were in fact experiencing the God’s wrath. Certainly what they experienced we could experience. In order to avoid such a thing:

We need to avoid being deceived.

We need to avoid being forgetful.

We need to avoid being ignorant.

So let us not be ignorant of this. That those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness and who therefore fail to manifest their love for the truth certainly run the risk of God saying to you, “Since you have repeatedly chosen darkness then you shall have darkness. Having spurned life then you shall have death.”