

II THESSALONIANS 2:5-12
THE LAWLESS ONE!
PART 2

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Thessalonians chapter 2 as we continue our study through Paul's second letter to the church in Thessalonica. And keep in mind the reason that Paul wrote this second letter.

First of all, the church in Thessalonica, the people, were going through heavy persecution for their faith in Christ. Thus, we see Paul give to them *ENCOURAGEMENT IN SUFFERING* in chapter 1 of II Thessalonians.

Not only that, but now there were false prophecies given, false teaching was spoken and a false letter supposedly from Paul himself telling these young believers that they missed out on the Rapture of the church and thus, they are in the Day of the Lord! That had to rock their world and discourage them. Probably wondering what they did to miss out on the Rapture!

Thus, here in II Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul gives to these young believers *ENLIGHTENMENT ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD!*

They were worried, they were wondering how they could have missed it, as I have said, and thus, Paul tells them not to be shaken, not to be troubled by these things you are hearing because they are not true!

Now that sounds great, but is there proof to what Paul is saying, that the Day of the Lord had not started yet. I mean, they were going through intense persecution for their faith. There were these prophecies and false teachings and a false letter that seemed to be saying that they were in the Day of the Lord! So where is the proof?

Paul tells them that prior to the Day of the Lord the church will be Raptured or taken away first and then the man of sin will be revealed, the Antichrist, which will usher in the Day of the Lord or the Tribulation Period!

Paul put it like this in II Thessalonians 2:3, **“Let no one deceive you by any means for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.”**

Now I do realize that some feel that this **“falling away”** speaks of apostasy and thus, it will reach its climax and then the Day of the Lord will begin.

Again; context, context, context! What were the Thessalonians believers worried about? That they missed the Rapture and the Day of the Lord has begun. So that is what Paul is dealing with here, the Rapture comes first, and the Day of the Lord then begins!

As Paul Lee Tan notes in regard to **“the falling away”**, “The definite article ‘the’ denotes that this will be a definite event, . . . Paul refers here to a definite event which he calls ‘the departure,’ and which will occur just before the start of the tribulation. This is the rapture of the church.”

So, these words of Paul were to enlighten and encourage these believers that they did not miss the Rapture of the church and they are in the Day of the Lord. The reason was simple, the Rapture comes first and then the Day of the Lord begins!

Paul also said in II Thessalonians 2:7, **“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.”**

And we saw that the restrainer is the Holy Spirit working in and through the church. So, when this restrainer is removed guess who else is removed? Yes, it is the church, believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, we call it the Rapture! And this occurs prior to the start of the Tribulation Period!

William MacDonald gives us some further insights regarding this restrainer, the Holy Spirit as he wrote,

“But here an objection is raised. How can the Holy Spirit be removed from the world? As one of the Persons of the Godhead, isn't He omnipresent, that is, everywhere at all times? How then can He leave the world?

Of course, the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. He is always in all places at one and the same time. And yet there was a distinct sense in which He came to the earth on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus had repeatedly promised that He and the Father would send the Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). How then did the Spirit come? He came as the permanent Indweller of the church and of every believer. Until Pentecost the Spirit had been with believers, but since Pentecost He has dwelt in them (John 14:17). Until Pentecost the Spirit was known to depart from believers - hence David's prayer, “Do not take your Holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11b). After Pentecost the Spirit remains forever in believers of the Church Age (John 14:16).

The Holy Spirit will, we believe, leave the world in the same sense in which He came at Pentecost - that is, as the abiding Indweller of the church and of each believer. He will still be in the world, convicting people of sin and leading them to saving faith in Christ. His removal at the Rapture does not mean that no one will be saved during the Tribulation. Of course they will. But these people will not be members of the church, but rather the subjects of Christ's glorious kingdom.”

Another writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

I take the view that the restraining power is the Holy Spirit working primarily through the church in the world. Today, the Holy Spirit restrains the world's lawlessness chiefly through the church. His presence in believers shines as the light of the world and permeates secular culture as the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16). When the church is taken to be with Christ in the air (1 Thes. 4:16-17), the children of light will be removed from the world of darkness, leaving a pitch-black night (cf. 1 Thes. 5:4-8). In the resulting darkness, every vestige of goodness will evaporate; every remnant of truth will unravel. And, what's worse, the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist, will take center stage. Yes, the "mystery of lawlessness" is already at work in the world (2 Thes. 2:7), just as the "spirit of antichrist" is already present (1 John 4:3), inspiring many little "antichrists" (1 John 2:18). However, Satan's spiritual wickedness is presently restrained, unable to take complete control, as it will when the restrainer is removed.

- Charles R. Swindoll, Swindoll's Living Insights, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, p. 135

Now, do we see lawlessness today? Of course we do, but please understand that it is being restrained. That is crazy when you think about it. When you look at what is going on in the world it doesn't seem restrained, but it is! And think about it, imagine what is unleashed as the church is Raptured and lawlessness will abound even more as there is no longer a restraining force!

And not only will lawlessness abound, but there will be "**the lawless one**" who will be revealed, and, as I have said, it is the Antichrist who is this "**lawless one.**"

One writer put it like this in regard to the Antichrist. He wrote, “This person will be the consummate lawless one; a blasphemous sinner, who will live in open defiance of God’s law. Of all the billions of godless, evil, lawless sinners in human history, his evil influence will be greater than any other’s. Even in the end times, when “lawlessness is increased” (Matt. 24:12), this Satan-energized leader will stand out as the one whose depraved, wicked, lawless leadership sweeps over the whole world - with influence never before seen.” (John MacArthur)

He goes on to say, “The Antichrist will be so completely devoted to the destruction of all that relates to God’s purpose and plan that he can be said to be destruction personified.”

I do realize that some laugh at the idea of the Antichrist. But let me be clear on this. The Antichrist is a real person who will be possessed by the Devil. And he will lead this world in rebellion against God during a period of time known as the Tribulation Period or those last seven years before Christ returns to this earth to set up His Kingdom on this earth and rule and reign for one-thousand years!

So, this morning we will look at this man known as the Antichrist, the points that Paul makes here. And that will lead us to our next study where we look at this idea of “the lie” which is specific. There are many lies out there but this one I believe is the same lie that was given by Satan to Eve in the Garden of Eden and it is growing today. And we will dig into that next time.

Now, before we get to our text this morning, listen to this regarding lawlessness and I think you will see that the heart of man is growing in this area. And keep in mind that a rebellion against God will cause man to do all kinds of evil, and we see that today.

I think this whole idea of lawlessness, rebellion is given to us in this poem by William Ernest Henley called “Invictus.” It goes like this,

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

- Ernest Henley, Invictus

Doesn't that capture the essence of human rebellion and lawlessness! I am doing what I want, I will bow to no one, I am the one who is in control! And as much as we see that with man today, it will continue to grow and the one who will lead this rebellion in the Tribulation Period will be the Antichrist!

And in the verses that we will be looking at this morning we will see that the Antichrist has a **LIMITED TIME** – II Thessalonians 2:8. The Antichrist will come on the scene with **LYING SIGNS AND WONDERS** – II Thessalonians 2:9. And finally, the Antichrist will bring about great **DECEPTION** – II Thessalonians 2:10.

So, with that as our background, let's begin reading in II Thessalonians chapter 2, beginning in verse 8 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica and Paul focuses on giving them ***ENLIGHTENMENT ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD*** as we look at this man of sin – ***THE LAWLESS ONE!***

II THESSALONIANS 2

VERSE 8

Why does Paul start out like this, telling us that the Antichrist will be revealed and then consumed in the fire of God's judgment?

Think about it. Paul wants them to have a correct perspective of the situation. Yes, there will be a time that the Antichrist will be on the scene, he will think he is god, but in the end, he will die as a man as judgment comes upon him.

The Antichrist will only be around as long as the Tribulation Period. Thus, only 7 years! But what he perpetrates upon the people of this world will be beyond what anyone can imagine. But we also need to keep in mind that he is fulfilling the plans and purposes of God!

Now, since Paul spoke of his destruction or that he has a ***LIMITED TIME*** on this earth, we will look at what happens to this man of sin, this son of perdition, the Antichrist!

In Revelation 19:11-21 John tells us, **“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”**

First of all, we see John speak of the Lord, the One who is **“Faithful and True”** the One who is called, **“the Word of God”** and He will come forth with His armies, probably you and me, the church coming with the Lord to set up His Kingdom on earth.

Let me show you why I believe that it is the church that comes with the Lord here. And keep in mind that this is not a New Testament idea, but only seven generations from Adam a prophet spoke of this.

In Jude 14-15 we are told, **“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’”** An amazing statement when you think about it!

And He is coming back to fight against the armies of the world who are coming against Him and we call this the Battle of Armageddon, but it is really not a battle at all.

The reason I say that is because of what John tells us in these verses that we read. When Jesus comes back, **“... out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. . . . And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”** Revelation 19:15, 21.

So, all those who are fighting against the Lord will be destroyed and we are also told in Revelation 19:20, **“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”**

Now the Antichrist, who thought he was so powerful and the False Prophet, who deceived the earth dwellers to follow after the Antichrist, are captured. And they are placed in the Lake of Fire burning with brimstone.

It is the final place of torment, after Hades, for all those who have rejected Jesus Christ. And the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be the first to experience Gehenna, and then, after the Millennial Reign of Christ, after the 1,000 years, the Great White Throne judgment will be set-up and all those who have rejected Christ will be judged, and they will move from Hades to outer darkness, Gehenna, along with Satan. And that is spoken of in Revelation chapter 20.

Now let me say this regarding Hell or this Lake of Fire that is spoken of here in Revelation 19 and again in Revelation chapter 20.

First of all, the Greek word that is used for Hell is GEHENNA and it is a place of perpetual burning. This Greek word is from the Hebrew, “ge Hinnom - the valley of Hinnom.”

And as we have seen in our study of the Old Testament, the valley of Hinnom was a deep, narrow valley to the south of Jerusalem, where the idolatrous Jews offered their children in sacrifice to Molech (2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31; 19:2-6)

As time went by this valley became the garbage dump you might say, the place where the refuse of the city was put. Thus, not only garbage did they put there but there were the dead bodies of animals, of criminals, all kinds of filth and they were cast into the fire that was always burning.

That is why Jesus uses this place, Gehenna as a picture of everlasting destruction, the Lake of Fire!

And this is the place where all those who have rejected Jesus Christ will be cast and for eternity they will experience the righteous judgment of God upon their lives for all the things they have done in this life.

They are sent to Gehenna because of their rejection of Jesus and the degree of punishment is determined by the things they have done throughout their life!

This is the place that the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be sent to and then, 1,000 years later, after Satan is loosed for a season, all those who have rejected Christ will be judged and sentenced to the Lake of Fire. And this is an eternal punishment!

So, as we have seen, the Antichrist's reign will be short-lived. The Lord will come back and destroy him, and he will be cast into the Lake of Fire! ***HIS TIME IS LIMITED!***

VERSE 9

Here in II Thessalonians chapter 2, in the passages that are dealing with this man of sin, the Antichrist, look at what he is all about.

First of all, we are told in II Thessalonians 2:4 that he, “**... who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.**”

That should remind us of the fall of Lucifer, we know him as Satan. Trying to exalt themselves above God, to be worshiped as God.

And think about that. Is man any different? Not at all. We saw it in the Garden where Adam disobeyed God, sinned and thus, was placing himself above God by doing his own thing.

And this man of sin will go into the rebuilt Temple, at the 3½ year mark, and demand to be worshiped as God!

As he is opposed to God, this man of sin, the Antichrist is called “**the lawless one**” or the one who does whatever he wants. He is not in obedience to God, not at all! God is holy, He is righteous, He is just, He is pure, there is no darkness in him at all!

On the other hand, the Antichrist is filled with darkness, it is his nature and it is what flows from his life!

And that should just make sense because Paul tells us here in II Thessalonians 2:9 that all that he does is, “**according to the working of Satan.**”

Now, what is the working of Satan? First of all we are told in John 10:10, Jesus said in regards to Satan, “**The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. . . .**” He does not bring life to people, only death, destruction and yet, people still follow him!

Also, the Bible tells us in John 8:44 as Jesus is rebuking the religious leaders, “**You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.**”

So here is the thing. If the Antichrist is following in Satan’s footsteps, can you trust him? Absolutely not, he too is a liar, and, as we will see in a few minutes, a deceiver. His natural language is lies and it sounds so good, even though what he says is a lie, people buy into it! And he wants to destroy your life and that is what the Antichrist will do during the Tribulation Period, destroy many lives!

Let me show you how easily we are take in.

Researchers: DiMassimo Brand Advertising, who studied the friends and neighbors of 200 volunteer liars.

Research Showed: “Americans will believe anything, as long as it comes from a friend or neighbor.” The ad company recruited 200 people to tell fibs to their friends, then polled the friends a week later. Sample results: “27 percent repeated the lie that ‘Just do It!’ was the slogan of Ex-Lax, instead of Nike; 22 percent believed that milk was ‘the other white meat’ instead of pork; 23 percent thought Amazon.com was a fashion website for large women; 29 percent agreed that Kenneth Starr was the president of Starbucks.”

It is funny but also sad when you think about how gullible American’s are. We are told,

If you ever need proof of human gullibility, cast your mind back to the attack of the *flesh-eating bananas*. In January 2000, a series of chain emails began reporting that imported bananas were infecting people with “necrotizing fasciitis” – a rare disease in which the skin erupts into livid purple boils before disintegrating and peeling away from muscle and bone.

According to the email chain, the FDA was trying to cover up the epidemic to avoid panic. Faced with the threat, readers were encouraged to spread the word to their friends and family.

The threat was pure nonsense, of course. But by 28 January, the concern was great enough for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to issue a statement decrying the rumour.

Did it help? Did it heck. Rather than quelling the rumour, they had only poured fuel on its flames. Within weeks, the CDC was hearing from so many distressed callers it had to set up a banana hotline. The facts became so distorted that people eventually started to quote the CDC as the source of the rumour. Even today, new variants of the myth have occasionally reignited those old fears.

The banana apocalypse may seem comical in hindsight, but the same cracks in our rational thinking can have serious, even dangerous, consequences

We may laugh at these far-fetched urban myths – as ridiculous as the ongoing theory that Paul McCartney, Miley Cyrus and Megan Fox have all been killed and replaced with lookalikes. But the same cracks in our logic allow the propagation of far more dangerous ideas, such as the belief that HIV is harmless and vitamin supplements can cure AIDS, that 9/11 was an ‘inside job’ by the US government, or that a tinfoil hat will stop the FBI from reading your thoughts.

Why do so many false beliefs persist in the face of hard evidence? And why do attempts to deny them only add grist to the rumour mill? It’s not a question of intelligence – even Nobel Prize winners have fallen for some bizarre and baseless theories.

- <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20160323-why-are-people-so-incredibly-gullible>

And look at how the Antichrist gets the world to worship him, besides the False Prophet who will promote him. We are told that he comes on the scene, “**with all power, signs, and lying wonders.**”

Let me say this. Just because someone has power, signs and wonders does that mean he is of God? Not at all.

What is interesting to me is that these same Greek words used here to describe the working of the Antichrist are used in what the Lord did.

We see this in Acts 2:22 where Peter said, **“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by *miracles, wonders, and signs* which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know.”**

And in Hebrews 2:4 we are told, **“God also bearing witness both with *signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*”**

Thus, we must be careful because not all signs, wonders and miracles are of God! Let me share this story with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

The following is a testimony of one of our listeners, Corissa, who was deeply steeped in the Signs and Wonders movement infecting many churches. She has given us permission to share her story, in hopes that others caught up in this beautiful deception will be willing to consider the spiritual danger that they are in, and be open to investigating this movement for themselves.

This, what I am about to share with you is only a small part of that testimony. As you read, consider that everything I am telling you comes from a person who was on the inside, experienced everything, and saw great things. Before you dismiss me as a nay-sayer, you need to know that, despite, what you may think, I know exactly what it is that I am talking about. I experienced it, felt it, heard it, and saw it.

I've seen this gold dust. It always happened during "praise and worship." I remember the first time I was being encouraged to pray for it. I was told to pray for it and receive it, and I opened my eyes to see my hands sparkling as if gold glitter was on them. There was no one walking around sprinkling this stuff on people. It was real! That is why so many are attributing it to God just because it really does happen. The problem is that it is 100% a sign and wonder, but it is not one of God. I experienced this in my quiet time at home, and anywhere I prayed. In fact, I first witnessed this when a girl at my school invited me to youth group. She was holding out her hand, and you could see it just shimmering. I asked her what it was and she said, "You get this when you have Jesus." Mind you, I was not saved at the time, but the Lord was already drawing me, and apparently Satan was hot on my heels, too.

I can remember seeing an aurora all around me every time it happened to me. It almost always followed praying a mantra type of prayer. I've never seen the kind of gold that you can cash in, but I did experience seeing big chunks of it on my hand. Everyone would walk around in the congregation showing everyone their hands. Everyone had it! It wasn't until God showed me the truth behind this phenomenon that I began to realize that I was actually in a trance, hence the aurora.

I first witnessed the falsehood of this “sign and wonder” at a youth meeting one night back in 2006/2007. I was not a youth at this time, but was encouraged to come sit in with the youth to discuss topics that were going to be covered. Anyway, so we were on the topic of gold dust. My husband’s curiosity on the subject had peaked and I began to share some of my experiences (which are many), and so the youth pastor’s wife shared hers. Interestingly enough, she held out her hand and told him to look at all the gold dust that covered it. To my surprise, I saw nothing! I told her this, and she insisted that it was there all over. (Now, I know she would not lie about this as I witnessed it being on her hand in the past.) This baffled me for months as to why I could not see it! In fact, I never saw it again. What I didn’t realize is that God was already leading me away from it as I began doubting so many of my experiences and began questioning the sources. I was no longer practicing contemplative type of prayer nor was entering into a presence. Notice that I said presence, not HIS presence. Gold dust is of the devil.

I used to follow the likes of Todd Bentley, Benny Hinn, Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, Paul and Jan Crouch, Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Marlyn Hickey, Jesse Duplantis, TD Jakes, Crystal Cathedral, Paula White, and so on. How did God get me to see the cold-hard truth? First, He showed me that Joel Osteen was twisting Scripture. That was a hard pill to swallow, but even though, it was bitter tasting in my mouth, I digested it with humility. I then began to question teachers for the first time in all the years that I was saved. Pride was being chiseled away and I was actually becoming teachable!

I found a Christian forum, which God used to show me the truth about the signs and wonders movement also known as the hyper-charismatic movement. I fought it tooth and nail; debated with the Moderators of the forum and was really defensive in the apostasy sub-forum.

During this time, my church was holding services which were being influenced by Todd Bentley's Lakeland Revival. I knew something wasn't right, but couldn't put my finger on it. I believe the forum debates had planted seeds in my stubborn heart and I was finally given just enough discernment to detect something very off.

I remember one day, my husband was watching GodTV and Todd Bentley was running his marathon. If I remember correctly, that was all that was on for 24 hours a day. I may be wrong. Anyway, I felt a really familiar and unsettling presence filling the room. I immediately went to the computer room. What was that, and why did I feel the need to leave the room in a hurry? If it was of God, then the presence would not have been so oppressive.

I decided that I would actually research about Todd Bentley. I went back to the Christian forum and dug up the thread where they were discussing the revival. I watched the videos exposing the movement and became convinced that this man was either a con-artist, or he was an escapee from the mental institution. I mean, his idea of healing was to punch, kick and body slam the people he laid hands on. On top of that, he liked to say the word "Bam!" when laying his hands on people as if he had some type of anointing from a fight-happy spirit. Crazy!

One video led to another, and finally, a video exposing the Kundalini practice in Todd Bentley's "revival." It was at least 7 to 12 videos long. I sat there for hours with my mouth gaping, wondering what to make of it because the very things that were being exposed were, coincidentally, were what I experienced, accepted, and participated in.

I'll admit, I didn't want to believe it at first. I prayed to God. I kicked and screamed and cried, "do I have to give up my precious experiences?" I pleaded with God. I didn't want to let go, but the truth was cracking the foundation upon which this lie stood on. It took weeks for this all to sink in. I read the Bible more, I sought out teachings, and inside felt like a part of me was dying with each blow of truth. It was like someone picked up a rock and threw it at the mirror which shattered the reflection that I had been staring at. It was all just an illusion.

I was not highly favored, as I had been told. I did not have supernatural abilities. My dreams, as spiritual as they were, are subjective. I was spiritually stunted. I was an idolater who got wooed away from the truth through the lips of those who profess to preach "new revelations." I got saved in a church built on lies and I was spiritually starved. I had to go back to the milk of the Word. God used this time of despair to show me the truth. I was ripe to receive it and was ready to surrender my experiences for the truth. God opened door after door once I gave up those experiences. They were like carved images that I worshiped. They were my chronicles of truth built on sand!

- <https://standupforthetruth.com/2013/07/deceiving-signs-and-wonders-corissas-story/>

Can Christian's be fooled into these lying signs and wonders? Of course they can and are! We need to be careful and place all that we see, all that we hear in front of God's Word to see if it is true or not. If it is not of God, you will see that the Word of God exposes it.

And please understand that Satan can't do anything he wants unless God allows him to and that goes for the Antichrist as well. Then why does God allow it in the first place? To test the hearts of His people.

In Deuteronomy 8:2 we are told, “**And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.**”

Isn't it amazing today how many Christians are running after signs and wonders, this miracle healing service over here or the one that is over there.

But the Bible tells us that signs and wonders will follow after those who believe in Jesus Christ. (Mark 16)

They have put the cart in front of the horse by following after signs and wonders. Instead of serving the Lord and allowing the Lord to work through them, they are looking for these signs and wonders and folks, these signs and wonders are all over the place today and many of them are not from the Lord!

Several years ago, in Chicago, people gathered to see a picture of Mary that appeared on a wall, the picture was made out of salt and supposedly miraculously appeared.

How sad! The deception of these false signs and wonders will be even worse during the Tribulation Period as the Antichrist puts on a pseudo-resurrection from an assassination attempt on his life!

In Revelation 13:3 we are told, “**And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.**”

Did you see that the Antichrist receives this, “**... deadly wound [that] was healed**”? I believe that there will be an assassination attempt on the Antichrist and from this near-death experience you might say, he comes back to life.

Now I don't believe it is an actual resurrection experience, but it appears to be and remember, the Antichrist working as Satan would, to deceive and we will deal with that next. But look at what Zechariah 11:17 tells us, **“Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded.”**

This is going to be such a convincing counterfeit death and resurrection that the whole world will believe it was genuine and worship this beast, the Antichrist!

So, the Antichrist will come on the scene with *LYING SIGNS AND WONDERS* and what he will do with those lying signs and wonders is cause a massive *DECEPTION*, as we will see next.

VERSE 10

This is a very sad verse to me because we see people reject the truth that they may be saved to believe the deception of this man, the Antichrist, and be destroyed!

And when we speak of the Antichrist please understand that this word is used only four times and by the apostle John. We see it spoken of in I John 2:18, 2:22, 4:3 and in II John 7. And as many hear this word they think it means against or opposed to. But there is more to it than that.

You see, *Anti* is a Greek prefix that not only means “opposed to” but “in the place of.” And yes, the Antichrist will indeed *oppose* Christ but in the most diabolically clever way possible: by pretending to *be* Christ.

And, as we have seen the world will follow and worship him. And that tells me that a false Christianity must become the world religion - a "Christianity" that all religions can accept and that embraces all religions into "one faith."

Hence the necessity for today's growing apostasy: to create an apostate church to be the Antichrist's earthly bride, just as the true church is Christ's heavenly bride. Such is the important role of the New Age movement and the many accelerating delusions and seductions in these "last days."

So, this third point regarding the Antichrist is *DECEPTION!*

Make no mistake about it, people fall prey to deceptions, even today, because they have not received the love of the truth, they have rejected Jesus as their Lord and Savior and God gave them what they wanted, life without Christ by sending them a strong delusion.

You see, abandoned by God because of the choices they made to reject the Gospel! Condemned by God because of the choices they made to reject the Gospel! But God's desire is for all to be saved but He will not force anyone into the kingdom, it is your choice.

Paul told Timothy of God's great desire to see all saved in I Timothy 2:4-6, as he tells us that God, "**who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**"

God so loved the world that He gave His son to pay in full the penalty for our sins so that we can fellowship with God once again. Sin separated us from God and Jesus came to restore that fellowship. He is the Mediator between God and man, the only One!

And yet, people reject this love of the truth and they are being deceived. Now please understand that Satan is a master of deception and so-too will be the Antichrist. Remember how Paul warns us in II Corinthians 11:13-15 of this very thing as he wrote, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

Then how can we know the truth? How can we not be deceived by Satan and his workers? It is simple. Jesus said in John 8:31-32, **“... ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

The truth of God’s Word will expose the lies, the deceptions that are out there. Then why are so many people taken in by these lies, by these deceptions? Because they have rejected the love of the truth!

Paul tells us in Romans 1:18-25, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man - and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to**

dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

You see, they will be judged for their rejection of Jesus and will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire apart from Christ where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth all because they rejected the love of the truth and believed the lie!

And next time we will be looking at *THE LIE*, because I believe it is specific and it comes right from the Garden of Eden. You see, even a 6,000-year-old lie, if it works, why change it and he hasn't and I believe he will use it to deceive many. And, as you will see, many are already deceived believing this lie!

DECEPTION is a big part of what the Antichrist will perpetrate upon the people who are living during his day!

And let me give you this to think about in regard to deception. With the Devil, he tries to mimic the trinity of God.

Satan is a type of God the Father. The Antichrist is a type of God the Son, even with a resurrection, although his is false. And the False Prophet is a type of the Holy Spirit. This is an unholy trinity compared to God's Holy Trinity.

But make no mistake about it, Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet are ***DECEIVERS!***

So, as I begin to close this morning, look at what we have seen in these verses that we have been looking at here in II Thessalonians chapter 2.

THE ANTICHRIST HAS A LIMITED TIME – II Thessalonians 2:8. The Lord will take care of Him with the brightness of His coming and the Antichrist will be cast into the Lake of Fire and suffer eternal punishment!

THE ANTICHRIST WILL COME WITH LYING SIGNS AND WONDERS – II

Thessalonians 2:9. Just because someone does something that you can't explain does not mean it is from God. You must take what you see, what you hear and compare it to the Word of God.

Why? Our last point explains it.

THE ANTICHRIST WILL BRING ABOUT GREAT DECEPTION – II Thessalonians

2:10. The only hope to guard against this deception is Jesus Christ, the love of the truth that is found in the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God!

And I will close with this for you to think about. We are told,

In the midst of this darkness, we should hope in God. We should find comfort in the fact that no matter how dark the description of this man of lawlessness, God is still the King and Ruler of this world. But there is one further description in this passage to notice. The most powerful picture in this passage is not of the Antichrist. In spite of all the descriptions of the Antichrist as taking his seat in the temple and proclaiming himself to be God, the most powerful description in this passage is of Jesus Christ.

Paul says that the Lord Jesus will kill the Antichrist “with the breath of his mouth” (v. 8). Can you picture that? Our Lord Jesus Christ can destroy this wickedness and bring it to nothing by the very breath, or literally “spirit,” that comes out of his mouth. That is the power of Jesus Christ. Our hope is rooted in him, and one day he will destroy all the rebellion and roll back the curse as he makes all things new.

- James H. Grant Jr., 1 & 2 Thessalonians, p. 185

May we not lose sight of things and the reality of who God is and who is not God! May we keep our eyes focused on the Lord and keep that perspective no matter what we are going through because there will be much deception out there. There will be many lying signs and wonders that come our way. But in the end, the Lord will rule and reign from Jerusalem! But remember, let Him rule in your life now and you will not be ***DECEIVED!***