

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 27TH - 28TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 2 THESSALONIANS

MISSING THE DAY (2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-2)

STILL CONFUSION ABOUT CHRIST'S RETURN

Though Paul had already written to them about the 2nd coming of Christ, they were still confused. The source of the confusion were rumors and even fake letters stating Jesus had already returned and they missed it.

- The new Christians were **letting every wild claim of the end times grab their attention, making them act irrationally.**

THE POINT OF ESCHATOLOGY IS TO BE PREPARED

Paul wasn't given all of the details of Christ's return like John was. Paul's goal was to ease the fear and alarm about the return of Jesus, not explain every facet of the end of the world.

- In the study of end times we can disagree on specifics about how the final 7 years will play out. **What we cannot disagree on is our preparation for His return.**

THE 3 SOURCES OF MISINFORMATION

Paul said the false rumors came through "either by prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us."

- The "prophecy" was more than likely an untested word someone thought was from God but it contradicted Paul, the messages were rumors that got to Paul, and the letters were bogus letters in Paul's name.

THE DANGERS OF NOT GOING TO THE SOURCE

Because **perceived words from God weren't tested, whispers of gossip were entertained,** and **letters that contradicted the message of Paul were trusted,** confusion led to chaos in the church.

- **We must test all things through the Word, be slow to speak, and refuse to entertain counterfeit gospels.**

THE 2ND COMING WILL BE VERY VISIBLE

When it comes to "The Day of the Lord," Christians will not only feel its approach, but it will also be a very visible and global event.

- Rev. 1:7 says, **"every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him."** 1 Thess. 4:16 says Jesus will come **"with a shout...and with the trumpet of God."**

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS (2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4)

THE "APOSTASY" MUST COME FIRST

Paul tells the paranoid believers that a couple things will happen before Jesus returns: there will be a great falling away from the faith, and the "man of lawlessness" will be revealed.

- Jesus says in Mt. 24: 9-14 that **"many will fall away" because of persecution and the rise of false teachers near the end. The gospel will also spread to "all nations."**

CAN WE TALK ABOUT SOME SOBERING STATS?

ACU did a study in June that stated only 46% of American adults believe in God, 6% hold a biblical worldview, and 41% think the Bible is true. In contrast, Christianity is rapidly growing in Iran, Africa, and almost all Asian nations according to Pew Research.

- **This is truth both expanding and declining simultaneously** (Mt. 24:12-14).

THE ANTICHRIST (MAN OF LAWLESSNESS)

The Antichrist is one of the most popular and misunderstood topics in the Bible. Daniel wrote of him in 164 B.C., Jesus spoke of him around 31 A.D., Paul wrote about him in 52 A.D. and John around 95 A.D.

- The Antichrist is 1/3 of **an unholy trinity:** Satan, the beast of the sea (politician), and the beast of the earth (spiritual leader).

THE "BEAST FROM THE SEA" (REVELATION 13)

The Antichrist will come from a "sea" of people (humanity). He will be a real man and politician that will embody evil. He will also be fatally wounded in the head and "miraculously" healed similar to Jesus.

- When Satan restores and empowers the Antichrist, people will view him as a god and worship him.

THE "ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION"

The Antichrist will oppose everything theistic, even to the point of doing overtly blasphemous things. The crescendo of his blasphemy is stepping onto a holy site (most likely the Temple in Jerusalem) and proclaiming to be God.

- The temple in Jerusalem has been desecrated many times (Antiochus, Titus), but this is a future event during the Tribulation.
- **Daniel 9:27**

IT IS A BUILD UP THAT ESCALATES

From Daniel 9 it appears that 3 ½ years (half of a "week") into the Antichrist being in control that he really gets bold in his defiance of God and the persecution of Christians.

- The Antichrist is the embodiment of progressive evil over centuries, but **towards the end of time evil will compound and escalate more rapidly.**

BUT HE IS "DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION"

The Antichrist and the false prophet will not be destroyed, but cast alive into hell to be tormented for eternity.

- Not only will these men kill and persecute Christians on a global scale, they will mislead whole nations and commit blasphemous acts against God. Imagine the fury this will draw from God.
- **Revelation 19:20**

THE PROPER TIME (2 THESSALONIANS 2:5-8)

FORGETTING TO LEAN ON THE WORD

Paul rhetorically asks if they had forgotten his previous lessons on this. The problem was that the church **let other teachings on eschatology replace the message given to the apostles.**

- Though we can disagree on minors, the return of Jesus is clear in Scripture. **This is why the Bible must be our primary source of spiritual information.**

BEING RESTRAINED

The Antichrist and the 7 years of tribulation under his rule are being restrained by the Holy Spirit of God until "he will be revealed."

- The spirit of the Antichrist is already at work in the world (1 Jn. 4:3), but the culmination of evil is being restrained until **a strategic time when global society is morally suited for an Antichrist to rule.**

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL LEAVE?

Some believe that when the Antichrist is revealed that Christians will be raptured before the 7 years begin (pre-trib) and the Holy Spirit will leave the remaining population.

- Regardless of different rapture beliefs (pre, mid, post) it is a huge stretch to say the Holy Spirit will depart from humanity during the 7 years.

AT THE END OF THE 7 YEARS...

Rev. 16:16 and 19:19 tell us that the Antichrist will gather an army to meet Jesus at Armageddon, a valley near Megiddo in Israel.

- At this battle, all of the armies of the Antichrist will be "killed with the sword from the mouth" of Jesus after the Antichrist and the false prophet are thrown into hell.

JESUS DESTROYS ALL EVIL WITH HIS MOUTH

The "sword" from Jesus' mouth will be His words, not the Bible per say, but the spoken words of God.

- The fact that **God created the universe and humanity and will destroy all evil with His voice should encourage us to take the Bible (His Word and mind on paper) extremely seriously.**

NOT MISSING THE POINT

- The Thessalonians were **so worried about the end that they took their eyes off Jesus.**
- We must be careful to not get caught up in cracking codes, listening to hysterical "prophets," or seeking miraculous signs.
- We must live in relationship with Jesus and look for His return with wisdom and anticipation.

THE IDOLS OF POLITICS AND RELIGION

- Knowing Satan will use a politician (beast from the sea) and charismatic religious leader (beast from the earth) to wage war against Christ and His followers should be **a clear warning to not put our hope in politics (the state as god) or any religious/spiritual practices outside of the Bible's teaching.**

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

- The Bible is the story of the relationship of humanity and the Creator God.
- The Bible is the infallible principles and teachings of God to humanity that lead us into a life of holiness and honor.
- The Bible is logical and practical instruction on how to live everyday.
- It warns and equips us for Jesus' return.

GOOD IS SOVEREIGN

- The Christian should not live in fear of evil empires, persecution, economies, or even the 7 years of tribulation because God is not only with us, He is in control and has told us of the victorious outcome.
- **We must be cautious to not get distracted by the trouble of the times.** Our job is to simply **trust and obey** Christ until He returns for us.

AN HONEST INVENTORY

- Do we find ourselves being more concerned about end times than building a relationship with Jesus?
- Have we misplaced our hope in gov't and even religious practice?
- Are we reading and obeying the Word?
- Do we trust that through it all God is in control?