

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 4TH - 5TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 2 THESSALONIANS

PREFERRING LIES (2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12)

SATAN IS NOT VERY ORIGINAL

The Antichrist will have parallels with Jesus: recovering from a fatal wound, part of a trinity, both will require exclusive worship and the working of "miracles, signs, and wonders."

- Not only is the Antichrist counterfeit, he is powered by the evil power of **Satan, whose sole purpose is to "steal, kill, and destroy" our lives.**

HOW WILL THE ANTICHRIST GARNER WORSHIP?

Miracles, signs, and wonders are very similar. The Antichrist will have supernatural ability to perform signs that will confirm that he has control. The "wonders" will amaze the populace, and they will treat him with respect and reverence.

- **This is why we must test supposedly upernatural events by the Word of God even in the church.**

LET'S TALK ABOUT MIRACLES FOR A SECOND

The Bible is clear that the Gifts of the Spirit and the miracles of the Bible are both literal and still happen at times today. **The problem seems to be when emotions and selfish ambition take the place of good theology.** When this happens, people get spiritually hurt.

- **God will not contradict His Word, and all the miracles of the Bible had a purpose.**

"THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING"

True Christians will be able to spot counterfeit spiritual activity, but those who **do not have a desire** to know the true God will be deceived and entrapped by the Antichrist's tricks.

- Paul says they're destined to "perish" because they "did not accept the love of the truth and so be saved." **God freely offers salvation, but we must choose to receive it.**

THE TRAPS OF OUR DAY

Evil has always been used to ensnare people and destroy their lives. In our day, we have seen an escalation of the **desire for power, narcissism, sexual degradation, complete moral blindness, and aggression.**

- **Without a relationship with God and the guidance of His Word, we are easily lured into the sinful traps of Satan.**

GOD WILL GIVE US OVER TO OUR DESIRES (ROMANS 1:24)

Because people choose to believe lies, God obliges their desires by giving them over to deception and a **"strong delusion,"** the ultimate one being the Antichrist.

- Simply listen to our current conversations of relative truth and choosing our "realities." **We haven't only rejected God, but reason, logic, and science (all products of God).**

LIFE WILL FALL APART NOW AND FOREVER

Paul says these people are "already perishing," meaning that their current path (beliefs and actions) is leading them to destruction.

- Simply put, **failing to believe and live in the truth of Jesus not only sets us on a path that will eternally separate us from God (anything good), but it also causes destruction in the present.**

GOD DOESN'T WANT THIS FOR US

Jeremiah 29:11 says that God has good plans for us. 2 Peter 3:9 says that it is not God's will that anyone perishes, "but all to come to repentance." God loves us, and that's evident in the Cross.

- **We must not only choose to accept His love and grace, we must also choose to not "delight in unrighteousness," therefore rejecting a righteous Savior.**

STANDING (2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-17)

WE THANK GOD THIS ISN'T YOU

Paul praises and encourages the church in Thessalonica because they displayed an obedient Christian life through their love and dedication to Christ.

- **We all need encouragement, especially when it is difficult to live out our faith.** This is why we will need the church more as evil increases in the world (Hebrews 10:25).

"FROM THE BEGINNING, GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU"

Theologians have been arguing about predestination and free will for centuries, but the Bible seems to teach both: **our salvation is initiated by God's Spirit, but we must also respond with "a belief in the truth."**

- "Sanctification" is the process of us acting and living more like Jesus so we can be used by God to advance His kingdom.

CALLED TO RECEIVE "GLORY"

Paul says that the Word given to him was being used to draw people searching for truth into a relationship with Jesus that we "might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- God not only wants good things for us, He wants us to experience power, splendor, and majesty like Jesus. **God wants us to be co-heirs to a kingdom** (Romans 8:17).

BUT WE MUST STAND FIRM

The Word not only tells us to stand firm but it prepares us for what we will have to endure. We must **"hold to the traditions [we] were taught"** regardless of how hard living out our faith may become if we're to experience "glory."

- **God seeks allegiance, not perfection. He is gracious to forgive and restore; we must simply be willing to follow Him.**

ULTIMATELY, IT ALL COMES FROM GOD

V16-17 says, "our Lord Jesus Christ...and God our Father Who has loved us" gives us **"eternal encouragement and good hope by grace"** that will **"encourage [our] hearts and strengthen [us] in every good work and word."**

- **Though we need each other, all power and stability comes from Jesus.**

KNOWING A COUNTERFEIT

- The only way to avoid the "strong delusions" of evil in the world is to know the truth laid out in God's Word.
- When we are presented with the truth, **we must then make a choice to either accept it,** and along with it God's love and grace or **reject it** and be given over to our lies.

"RUNNING FROM IMMORALITY"

- Choosing Christ begins with repenting for any evil in our lives. **Repentance isn't just asking forgiveness; it's a deliberate turning away from things that displease God.**
- The Bible not only defines what is immoral, but it tells us to run from such things (1 Cor. 6:18) and even avoid things that appear evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

CHOOSING TO LIVE IN LOVE AND GRACE

- We must not only turn from evil, **we must also choose to live in the love, grace, and mercy of God.** This happens when we build trust in Him through a relationship with Him created through **prayer, reading the Word, and obedience.**
- **A relationship with Jesus yields glory and security both in the present and in eternity.**

AN HONEST INVENTORY

- Are we familiar with truth enough to identify and avoid lies?
- Have we delighted in unrighteous things? Have we chosen a path of destruction?
- Do we run from or flirt with immoral things?
- Are we choosing to live in the love and grace of Jesus every day through a relationship with Him?