

2 Thessalonians 2

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Tape # 8190
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Let's turn to 2 Thessalonians, chapter two.

Paul said, *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him*, Now that is a reference to the rapture of the church, the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians in chapter four, Paul wrote to them about the rapture of the church. How that we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and shall forever be with the Lord. And so he is writing now concerning this coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him.

²*That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.* (That the day of the Lord has come.) Unfortunately in the King James, we have a poor translation here, and what was happening is that because of the persecution against the church in Thessalonica, there were those who felt that the tribulation, the Great Tribulation period, had already started. So Paul is saying, I don't want you to be worried concerned, and so forth, whether by spirit.

Now it possible that there were those who were sort of acting like they were under the anointing of the Spirit. They were giving prophetic utterances and saying, you know, we are in the Great Tribulation, or it's possible that there were those that were coming and saying, well I heard Paul say that this is the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord has come.

Or and also, there were letters that were sent to the church and as though they were sent by Paul, but they were spurious letters, declaring to them that the Day of the Lord had come. That they were already in the Great Tribulation, that the experience, the persecution and all, that they were going through, was the beginning of the Day of the Lord, the Great Tribulation.

So he said I don't want you to be troubled in your spirit and all, as though the Day of the Lord had already come or is here now. This is not the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

Now, the interesting thing is that the Day of the Lord encompasses a period of time. But in these Jewish reckoning of days, they always began the days with sundown. And they go from sundown to sundown. We go from midnight to midnight. But they calculated from sundown to sundown because in Genesis, it would say, it was evening and it was morning, day one. It was evening, it was morning, day two. So they came to reckon their days from sundown to sundown.

The Day of the Lord will begin with darkness. There will be a time of great tribulation, as Jesus said, such as the world has never seen before or will ever see again. But it begins with the wrath of God being poured out against the Christ rejecting world. It will begin with the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition. So it begins with darkness but then it goes into the glorious light, when Jesus comes again with His church to establish the glorious Kingdom of God upon the earth. So it goes from the darkness to the light, the Day of the Lord. It will culminate, of course, in the glorious millennial reign of Jesus Christ over the earth. And that's a part of the Day of the Lord, but it begins in darkness. It begins in judgment, God's judgment upon the earth.

So Paul is saying, don't be confused. This is not yet the Day of the Lord. ³*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (That is, the Day of the Lord.) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;* So before the Day of the Lord comes, there's going to be a falling away. There will be a revelation of the Son of Perdition, a man of sin.

John calls him the antichrist. That's the tag that seems to have hung on. There are probably thirty different titles in the Scripture for him, but John's title of antichrist seems to have stuck more than the rest.

The man of sin, the son of perdition, will be revealed there at the beginning of the Great Tribulation period.

In the heavenly scene in John's Book of Revelation, as John sees the Lamb coming and taking the scroll

out of the right hand of Him who is sitting upon the throne. As He begins to break the seals, with the breaking of the first seal, comes forth the white horse with its rider, conquering over the earth. The white horse and the rider is the antichrist. And the beginning of the great judgment period of chapter six of the Book of Revelation, through chapter eighteen, begins with the revelation of the antichrist, the white horse and its rider.

He will come in peaceably, Daniel tells us. And he will actually bring an era of great prosperity. You can imagine the prosperity that will ensue immediately following the removal of the church from the earth. As people scramble to possess those things that were possessed by the believers. We will be leaving everything behind. People will be frantically going in and looting our houses, taking whatever they can get. There will be a time of great prosperity. But it will soon change. And the last three and one half years will be hell on earth, literally, as the demonic forces are let loose and the powers of darkness take full control over the earth.

So let no man deceive you by any means for that day will not come unless there is a falling away first. The word translated, falling away, is the Greek word, *apostasia*. It means to depart. The root word is to depart. Through usage it has come to mean to depart from the faith, apostasy. But the word, itself, just means to depart.

In writing to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:1), Paul is talking about the last days, he says many will depart from the faith, that was the apostasy of Demas, departing from the faith. But the word just means to depart.

Now I do believe that it does mean there will be a departing from the faith by many. In fact as you look at the so-called church, today, much of the church is in the state of apostasy. All you have to do is read what is going on in some of the major denominations. And you realize that the church is in a state of apostasy, departing from the faith.

A classic example is the “Jesus Seminar”, where these supposed scholars meet and they discuss the New Testament, trying to determine which of the statements were really made by Jesus and which ones were made up by the Apostles. And it is a blasphemous council, but it gets a lot of press and a lot of attention. These men, many of them, have very high positions in the seminaries across the country and in some of the major denominations. So there is a departure from the faith. He questioned, when I return, will I find faith on the earth?

But also, the word can refer to the departure of the saints, the rapture of the church. The Great Tribulation will not take place until there is a departure first—the departure of the church, the falling away, which literally is departure, as the church departs to be with the Lord.

As soon as the church departs, the man of sin, the antichrist, son of perdition, will be revealed. The title, son of perdition, was given to one other (John 17:12). And that was to Judas Iscariot. He is referred to in the Scriptures as the son of perdition.

Speaking of the antichrist, the son of perdition. He is described as opposing God and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

When the antichrist takes over the European Community, from which he will rise, he will make a covenant with the nation of Israel. No doubt in this covenant, he will grant them the privilege of rebuilding their temple on the temple mount.

But I don’t believe that it will be in the area of the Dome of the Rock mosque. I believe that the Jews will be granted the northern half of the Temple Mount area.

Dr. Asher Kaufmann, who has made quite an extensive study of the Temple Mount, has come to the conclusion that Solomon’s temple and the second temple actually stood north of the present dome of the rock, about 322 feet. If you will come north from the Dome of the Rock mosque, three hundred and twenty-two feet, you will find actually a little area of flat bedrock, which is called the Dome of the Spirit. It has a little building over it, an open type building, just pillars and a roof. It was also called the Dome of the Tablets. Dr. Kaufmann believes that the name, Dome of the Tablets, is because this is where the Tablets, the Ark of the Covenant stood, in Solomon’s Temple.

It is interesting that when in the Book of Revelation, chapter eleven, John sees the new temple that will be built. He is given a ruler and he is told to measure the new temple (Revelation 11:1-2). The Lord said, don’t

measure the outer court. It's been given to the Gentiles. Where the Dome of the Rock and the *al Aqsa* Mosque stand, would be in the outer court, which the Lord told John, not to measure, because it was given to the Gentiles.

Ezekiel gives us quite an interesting description, giving you the measurements of the new temple. And as Ezekiel gives to you the measurements of the new temple, he describes a wall that is built around it. And he said (Ezekiel 42:20), this wall was to separate the holy place from the profane.

There are probably some twenty acres of ground north of the Dome of the Rock Mosque. This gives plenty of room for the Jews to rebuild their temple and to have the area of worship, the southern half of the temple mount given to the Moslems, that they might continue their worship there. The northern half, given to the Jews, for them to worship there. This would be an ideal, perfect, solution to a seemingly impossible situation.

Today the Moslems will not give up the Temple Mount. Should the Jews, by force, try to take it. It would immediately precipitate a holy war. And the nation of Israel, the government, is not ready for such a thing.

The Jews are wanting to rebuild their temple. There are several groups that have dedicated themselves to the rebuilding of the temple. And they are planning to rebuild the temple. As I have talked to some of the more militant ones, they said, we might have to by force, go and take back the temple mount. They are not really interested in just having a part of it. They want all of it. And so you have an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. There seems to be absolutely no solution.

⁴*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;* But the man of sin will make a covenant with the nation of Israel, whereby they will be granted the right to rebuild their temple. It also will be a signal to the Jews, that this man is their messiah. For the Jews today are looking for a man who will lead them in the rebuilding of the temple.

This man will have the power of the European Community. He will be so powerful, because he will be given the powers of darkness. Satan gives to him his throne, which is the earth. He gives to him great power and great authority. And the world will say, who is able to make war with the beast? He will have the forces and the powerful forces that people will be afraid of him, even the great nation of Islam and all of the people. He will speak with authority and people will respect it.

When he establishes this covenant and the Jews are able to rebuild the temple, they will say this is the Messiah. This is the one we are looking for. You can ask most of the rabbis today how they will recognize the Messiah? They will tell you, he will lead us in the rebuilding of our temple.

So Jesus said I came in My Father's name. You didn't receive Me. Another is going to come and in his own name. Him, you will receive. That is, the antichrist, the beast, the son of perdition. And they will receive him and acclaim him as their messiah.

However, Daniel tells us that in the middle of the seven year period, that he will come to the temple. He will profane the temple. He will set up an abomination, which will cause the desolation or the Great Tribulation period.

Jesus, when He was talking to His disciples about the signs of His return (Matthew 24:15), His coming again to establish the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, when you see the abomination of desolation, that was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place. Daniel speaks about this abomination of desolation (Daniel 11:31; 12:11), which will be the man of sin coming into the rebuilt temple, after three and one half years, intruding into the Holy of Holies, and declaring that he is God.

so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. As Paul tells us here, that he, as God, sits in the temple of God, declaring that he, himself is God, demanding to be worshipped as God.

That is the final straw. That is the final event that will trigger the wrath and the judgment of God. I often wonder how can God be so patient, to allow sin to prevail as it does today? To put up with the blasphemy of men? How can God be so patient? He is! He is long-suffering. But this will be the final straw and it will trigger the Great Tribulation period, that time that has no equal in the history of humanity, in the judgment of God upon the earth.

So the next three and one half years will be the time of God's wrath that will be poured out in the cleansing of the earth in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ, to establish God's heavenly kingdom upon the earth

for a thousand years.

Jesus said when you see this abomination of desolation that Daniel spoke about, standing in the holy place. Then he said, let him who reads, understand. He said it's time for you Jews to flee out of Jerusalem. Don't stop for anything. We are told in Revelation that God gives them wings of an eagle that bears them to a wilderness place, where God will watch over them and keep the, that is the remnant for three and one half years. That is the three and one half years that the Great Tribulation is on the earth.

We are told in the Book of Revelation, chapter thirteen, that this man of sin, he is called the beast there, that they will make an image of the beast. They will give it power to speak and it could be some kind of a cloning. It will sit in the temple, in the holy of Holies. And all of the world will be commanded to worship it. So, this event will trigger the beginning of the end. Sitting in the temple of God, Jesus said, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, the Holy of Holies, that's the sign.

⁵*Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?* Paul said don't you remember that when I was yet you, I told you these things? Now, it's interesting that Paul was with them just such a short time, but he spoke to them a lot concerning the future, the prophecies of the future. Though he was just a few weeks, before he had to flee from Thessalonica, yet he felt that the subject of prophecy was so important. He was teaching them of the second coming of Jesus Christ, of the great judgment of God that is going to come upon the earth of this man of sin, that was going to be revealed. Remember he said, when I was with you I told you these things?

⁶*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.* Right now he is being held back from being revealed. It is my personal opinion that the antichrist is alive in the world today. He probably is already deeply involved in politics. I don't know who he is. I have no idea who he is. I'm not even interested in who he is. I don't plan to be here when he is revealed.

But there is a power that is holding back the floodgates of evil that are ready to pour out upon the earth.

Jesus, talking to the church of Philadelphia, His true church in the last days that was faithful to the Word, He said, you have a little strength. We are not a great power in the world today, even in the United States. There is a little strength, but just enough to hold back the tide of evil, because as long as there are ten righteous people, God will spare.

You remember how that Abraham met the angels who were on their way to destroy the city of Sodom (Genesis 18 & 19). Abraham, when they announced to him their intentions, knowing that his nephew, Lot, lived in Sodom, he said shall not the Lord of the earth be just? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom? Would You destroy the righteous with the wicked? And the Lord said if there are fifty righteous people, We will spare the city. And Abraham began to bargain. He got the Lord down to ten righteous people. Then the Lord said if there are ten righteous people, we will spare the city. They came to the city of Sodom and you remember the story. So in the morning the angels said to Lot, get out of here. Don't look back. Hurry, we can not destroy this place until you are safely out of it (Genesis 19:22). And how the angels led Lot, his wife and two daughters out of the city of Sodom. And then the judgment came upon that city and it was destroyed, but not until God had delivered Lot.

Even so, the judgment of God is ready to come upon the earth, but God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. And so it is that little strength that the church has that is holding back the tide of evil. We are the only voice that speaks out against the evil in our society today, a little strength. And really people get extremely upset when we do speak out.

It isn't popular to speak out against abortion. It won't make you popular to speak against homosexuality. We had someone visit the church recently who was extremely upset because I said something negative about homosexual life styles. And you see, that isn't popular. It isn't politically correct. And yet we are voice, the only voice, that is the church. I not saying me, goodness sakes, I have no illusions, or delusions. But the church is the only voice. It's the power that is holding back the forces of darkness from just flooding in. That which withholdeth, you know, what is withholding, that he might be revealed in his time. He is right at the gate, chomping to get out, to take over. But the power of the Spirit of God within the church is hindering.

⁷*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:* This morning we talked about the mystery of iniquity. If

you weren't here, you can get the tape. The tremendous mystery of iniquity--why people are attracted to evil. Why people seem to love evil more than loving righteousness. Why people would choose the path of death rather than the path of life, the mystery of iniquity. Why people would engage in things that are only harmful and destructive, things that destroy them. What is the allurements? What is the attraction that they love those things more than life itself—the mystery of iniquity, how we can get so caught up and so absorbed in iniquity.

The mystery of iniquity is already at work, *only he who now letteth* (hinders—the word, letteth, in the King James is better translated, hinders. It used to be an English word that was fine when it was translated, but the usage has changed. And our modern word, hinders, is a much better translation of the Greek.) *will let, until he be taken out of the way*. The Holy Spirit within the church, is the hindering force that is holding back the revelation of the antichrist. He will hinder. He will hold back until He is taken out of the way—that is, until the church is removed.

Now, the Holy Spirit will not be removed from the earth. That is an impossibility. The Holy Spirit is God, one of the three persons of the Godhead. And as such, is omnipresent. He is everywhere present in the universe.

As David said, where can I flee from thy Spirit? Whither can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there. If I descend into hell, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and I flee to the uttermost parts of the seas, even there you surround me. I am encompassed by You.

But the Holy Spirit within the church, that is, the church will be removed. Once the church is removed, then God's Spirit will again be put upon the nation of Israel. And God will have a faithful remnant. He will seal one hundred forty-four thousand of them to go through the tribulation period, much as God sealed Noah and he went through the great tribulation period, however, Enoch was translated before the great tribulation period—a type of the church. He walked with God and he was not, because God took him. But Noah, a type of Israel, going through the Great Tribulation, but sealed by God in order to survive.

⁸*And then shall that Wicked be revealed* (That is, when the hindering force of the church, the Holy Spirit within the church is removed, then shall that Wicked one be revealed.) *whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming*: When the antichrist takes over, he is going to have tremendous power, Satanic power. He will be able to do all kinds of miracles. And by these miracles, He will be able to deceive the nations. And people will wander after him because of the signs and the miracles that he is performing. He will seemingly be invincible. There will be an assassination attempt on his life, which he will miraculously survive! And he will appear to be invincible to the world. And they will be saying, who is able to make war with him? Who can stand against him?

But when Jesus comes again, he will be destroyed with the brightness of the coming of Christ and with the Word that goes out of the Lord's mouth.

Again in Revelation, chapter nineteen, it speaks of his being destroyed by the coming again of Jesus and by His Word. The Word of God is a sharp two-edged sword. He will be consumed with the Spirit of His mouth. He will be destroyed with the brightness of His coming.

⁹*Even him* (the antichrist), *whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders*, He will be a miracle worker. He will be able to work all kinds of phenomenal things because he will have Satan's power.

Now it would seem that Satan raised a great storm on the Sea of Galilee. It could be that he will be able to command the wind and with the powers that he has, people will be deceived because they will be supernatural powers that he will manifest—lying wonders, signs, all kinds of power.

¹⁰*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved*. It's tragic! People who reject the truth of God, people who do not have a love for the truth. They will be deceived. And they will perish. They didn't receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

There are some who interpret this, (I'm not certain that they are correct). But there are some that interpret this as meaning that if you have heard the truth of Jesus Christ and have rejected it, there will be no opportunity for you to be saved after the church is taken out.

Now we do know during this Great Tribulation period, there will be a great number of people who will be saved. We do know that this man of sin, the son of perdition, the beast, the antichrist, the wicked one, will cause everyone, both small and great, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. And all of commerce will be done with the mark. We call it the mark of the beast. Some kind of an identification mark, an identification number, perhaps, whereby you will do your buying and selling with this mark. No one will be able to buy or sell, but he also has power to put to death those who refuse to take the mark. And so we do know that if anybody does take the mark, that there will be no hope for their salvation, ever. Revelation 14, the warning by the angel, actually.

So, in the Book Revelation, chapter seven, John sees in heaven a great multitude of people who have been slain for the word of their testimony, martyred! And the elder said to John, who are these? Where did they come from? And John said, well, thou knowest, these are they, which came up out of the Great Tribulation and washed their robes white. They will hunger no more and so forth. And he goes on to tell of the conditions, through which, they were saved.

In Revelation, chapter twenty, John sees those that were martyred for Christ in the Great Tribulation period. They will be saved, but there are those commentators and I say, I don't necessarily agree with them, but I don't really necessarily disagree with them. I just say, I don't know. But they interpret this passage as saying, if you reject Jesus now, knowingly, have not the love of the truth, then there will be no opportunity for you to be saved in the Great Tribulation. So in case you have been holding that out as a safety net, you know. I'll live like the devil now and as soon as the church is gone, I'll repent and get right.

One fellow said they will never put a mark on me. He was, you know, an old tough guy, but, I said if you can't live for Christ now, how in the world or you going to die for Him then? They have not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

¹¹*And for this cause* (That is because they didn't have the love of the truth.) For this cause, *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:* That they would believe the antichrist. That they would be of those who worshipped him and the image.

¹²*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* As I say, I don't know if the commentators are correct or not, but I'll tell you what, when you are talking about eternal life, when you are talking about eternal salvation, I don't want any question marks! I want to be sure. If I was ever sure of anything, I want to be sure of my salvation. I don't to be hoping. I don't want to be living under a question mark. I want to love the truth and to follow the truth and live in righteousness so that there are no questions about my destiny. Eternity is too long to mess with question marks.

Paul said, ¹³*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord,* I like this, just, I'm always giving thanks for you, brothers, beloved of the Lord, *because God hath from the beginning chosen you.* That's the past. God chose you.

Jesus said to His disciples, you didn't choose Me. I choose you and ordained that you should be My disciples, that you should be forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. We are often called upon and rightly so to choose to follow the Lord. And that's right!

The Bible says (Revelation 22:17), whosoever will, let him come and drink from the water of life, freely. God has invited all to partake of salvation, but now all do partake. Those that do partake, were chosen of God to partake though the offer is open to all, God has chosen those to partake, but He chose on the basis of His foreknowledge.

Now this is where we get lost, because how do you think when you know everything? Do you have to think when you know everything?

Let us suppose for one day you could have omniscience, you could know everything for one day. I know that a lot of you would head up to Santa Anita. You would know every horse that is going to win. You would make a killing, because you knew before the race ever began, who was going to win. And so you would be making your choices on horses.

How about the lottery? You could clean up in the lottery because you would have the winning numbers every week, if you had a precognition, they call it. You knew in advance.

Now, God knows in advance. He is omniscient. He knows all things. If you had this kind of knowledge,

going to Santa Anita, would you choose losers? Would you bet on losers? That would be rather stupid, wouldn't it, to bet on the losers? If you knew that horse was going to lose, it would be ridiculous to bet on it.

Now, you see, here is where God has the advantage over us, He knows who the winners are! He doesn't choose losers! That ought to make you very thankful that He chose you because that's the assurance that you are going to win—the fact that God has chosen us!

You say, but that isn't fair! Oh, wait a minute, what's not fair? Well, it isn't fair that God should choose those that He is going to spend eternity with. Why isn't it fair? What's wrong with that? I don't see any unfairness there, especially when God has invited all. God has opened the door to all. God has not excluded anyone in the invitation. It's just that He knows those that will accept the invitation and be saved. Chosen in Him, that's our past, because God has from the beginning chosen you!

Spurgeon made a comment on that, tongue in cheek, it's good that chose me from the beginning before I was ever born. He would have never chosen me after I was born!

God has chosen you *to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*: That's the present. The past, from the beginning, He chose you. But the present is that He is sanctifying you by the Spirit.

The word, sanctify is akin to the word, holy. He has set you apart, washed, cleansed, and has given you the power of the Spirit to live a holy life. Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

¹⁴*Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* That's future! So God takes of the past! He is taking care of the present. He is going to take care of the future.

The future is the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved, now we are the sons of God, it does not yet appear what we going to be, but we know that when He appears, we are going to be like Him, for we will see Him as He is, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

¹⁵*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.* Stand fast in the truth, the things that I taught you. Now they were getting these spurious letters. They were getting these false prophets that were coming in, telling them different things. Paul is saying, hold fast to the traditions that I gave you, that I taught you and that I wrote to you in the first epistle. I set it out for you. Hold fast to these things.

¹⁶*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,* ¹⁷*Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.* A glorious benediction here by Paul. The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, who has loved us. He has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. May He comfort your hearts.

They were disturbed. They were upset. They thought they were in the Great Tribulation period. They thought that the Day of the Lord had come. There were those who were teaching that Paul said, we are in it. The Day of the Lord has come. This is the Great Tribulation. Paul said no, no. Now just comfort you hearts. Establish yourselves in every good word and work—a good exhortation.

Father, we just thank You for the way that You have laid out the map, so we know where we are going. And Lord, we can sort and look on the map and see where we are. And we are thankful, Lord, that we are almost home. That the journey is about over. We are almost there. And so, Lord, with anxious hearts, we wait in excitement for that day when You shall come and receive the church, gather us unto Yourself, that we might be with You in the glory of Your Kingdom. That we might see You in the glory that You had before the world ever existed. Lord, we wait for that day. We look forward to the day that we will be united together forever, in Your kingdom. Lord, comfort our hearts with the Word and with the hope in a world that is so distraught, a world that is being torn apart at the seams, a world that is drowning in iniquity. Lord, may we be strengthened and comforted with the hope of the future. In Jesus' name. Amen.