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**The Coming Lawless One, the Truth Rejectors, and the Children of God**

**II Thessalonians 2:9-17 (Lesson #3)**

Last week we read:

*“1 ¶ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 ¶ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.”*

As we move to some concluding remarks about the antichrist, it seems that although specific amounts of time are not mentioned, we do see the “revealing” of the lawless one. The Greek word is **ἀποκαλύπτω** (ap-ok-al-oop’-to) – The lawless one will be ***uncovered*** or ***unveiled*.**

But the Lord Jesus Christ will kill him, with his breath (we see the ease at which Jesus will put him down) and he will bring his work to nothing at the ***appearance of his coming***.

Again, we said the word here is **παρουσία** (par-oo-see’-ah). This is the ***“coming”*** of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This brings us to chapter 2:9:

***9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***

**The “coming” παρουσία** (par-oo-see’-ah) of the lawless one is according to the working and power of Satan. He will come with power, signs, and lying wonders.

This is the exact same word used (multiple times) for the **“coming”** of Jesus. Here the word **παρουσία** (par-oo-see’-ah) is used of the visible coming of the antichrist.

We are told two things:

1. He will be revealed (vs 8) and
2. He is coming (vs 9)

Now Paul adds an additional detail about his coming, it is according to the working of Satan!

The Greek word Paul uses is **ἐνέργεια** (en-erg’-i-ah). This word is used to describe the power of God in the resurrection of Christ and in our spiritual rebirth:

*“11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Col 2:11-12 ESV)*

But here it is describing the ***power of Satan*** that ***energizes*** the ***man of sin***.

**Vs 9b -** With all ***power***,***signs***, and ***lying wonders***.

The word translated ***“lying”*** is the Greek word is **ψεῦδος** (psyoo’-dos). These are fake, fraudulent, wonders. So, these wonders appear to be one thing, but in fact they are false, they are deceitful, they are ***“lying” wonders***. These are likely to be understood as “fake miracles”!

**Important point of application:**

Please keep in mind, although Paul is talking about the final antichrist, we must recognize that there have been and are many antichrists, there are many peddlers of error.

**Jesus said this:**

*“For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Mt 24:24 ESV)*

**John said this:**

*“1 ¶ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. 4 ¶ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.” (1Jo 4:1-5 ESV)*

**So, as we talk about these things, we must be on-guard (today) for those who deny any Theologically significant portion of the Bible truth about the Son of God:**

Virgin birth

Fully God and fully man

Sinless life

Sacrificial death

Resurrection from the dead

Salvation only through Him

To deny any of these fundamentals of the faith is the **“spirit of antichrist.”** **TODAY!**

**Vs 10a** – He (man of sin) will come with ***unrighteous deception****,* **but only to those who are to perish.** Because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

If you are a child of God, you will not be deceived and ultimately perish, in fact, just the opposite:

*“who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Pe 1:5 ESV)*

*“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Php 1:6 ESV)*

*“****38*** *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,* ***39*** *nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 8:38-39 ESV)*

*“****28*** *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.* ***29*** *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.* ***30*** *I and the Father are one."” (Joh 10:28-30 ESV)*

**Vs 10b - *they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.***

**How important is the truth about Jesus, the truth about salvation, how big of a deal is it**?

The truth that we share has consequences. Those consequences start today and flow into eternity.

Because (at least during the time of the antichrist) people who do not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Will be the same people who we read in verse 11:

**Vs 11 - *And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,***

This is very sobering, men and women reject God, reject His message of love, and one day, (at least during the time of the antichrist), God sends those who have rejected Him…

**Strong delusion!**

ASV – **“working of error”;** Holman **“strong delusion”;** Youngs **“working of delusion.”**

The verb is obviously in the future tense, and we see the picture, men in the here and now reject God’s message of love that is contained in the truth of His Son.

God is not idle; God sends those who reject the message of truth about His Son… **Strong delusion…**

This is part of the righteous judgment of God. Here we see God sends strong delusion (during the time of the antichrist) that men who have rejected the truth, might embrace the greatest lie of all.

The word translated ***strong*** is **ἐνέργεια** (en-erg’-i-ah). We saw this word was used to describe the power that raised Jesus from the grave and you and I to new life.

We saw this word used of the power of Satan that empowers the man of sin. Here we see if will be the **“power”** of deception, that is used to cause those who reject **“the truth”** to chase after **“the lie.”**

Now the idea that God responds to sin is all over the Bible. Think about Israel when they slumped into sin, think about Egypt, Babylon, Rome, or Greece.

When men push back against God’s truth, God often responds.

**Vs 12 - Ultimately, we see where the lie leads…**

Men during the time of the antichrist, reject God’s truth contained in the gospel, contained in His Son, and God sends then strong delusion that they might believe the lie!

**That they might all be condemned…**

**The Greek word is κρίνω** (kree’-no) – it means **to judge**, **to be judged**, **to be determined**, or **to be separated**.

The word itself can be used in a **positive**, **negative**, or even **neutral** (like making a decision) sense.

*Mat 7:2a “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged…”*

The context decides positive, negative, or neutral. Here we see it is **negative**. It is the judgment of God, thus the ESV translators translated the word (in the negative **“condemned.”** Other translations translate this to words like NKJV **“damned”**, ASV **“judged”**, or Holman **“condemned.”**

**Vs 12b - *who did not believe the truth.*** Clearly the truth that Paul has in mind is the gospel. We will see in a few seconds.

But God is not inactive in man’s rebellion, particularly once He has pulled back his restraining hand or as the text may imply, once the antichrist comes out of the midst.

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***13 ¶ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. 16 ¶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.***

First, as you hear these verses, before we make a single comment, you can sense how, the man of sin, (antichrist) and those who are deluded by him (those who reject the truth) are **juxtaposed**, **set against**, **compared to**, those who are saved, those who are children of God, those who are loved by God.

**Vs 13a –** The Greek word translated here in the ESV as ***“ought always”*** is the Greek word **ὀφείλω** (of-i’-lo).

Ought can give the wrong idea, the verb means **we owe something**, it is a **legitimate due**, or we might even say our **duty**.

Paul says we should without ceasing, continually, because we have a debt to do so, we should incessantly **“give thanks to God”** for those who are saved.

Here Paul is saying, as we see that we are saved, as we see that others are saved, it should drive us to this spirit of thankfulness to God (and if you do not mind me adding thankful to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

**\*\*\* Now as you look at verse 13, this is an amazing trinitarian declaration. \*\*\***

Here in one verse, Paul has packed some of the deepest theology in the Bible. Theology that we could spend lessons unpacking!

Then Paul tells us why we should be thankful to God for salvation. He does so with an amazing trinitarian declaration. We should always give thanks for those who are saved:

1. **Because God** (the Father) **chose you as the firstfruits to be saved**
2. **Because you are beloved by the Lord** (God the Son)
3. **Because our salvation is through sanctification and belief in the truth, all the areas where the Holy Spirit** (God the Holy Spirit) **works in our lives**

**Mark this verse in your bible, this verse explains concisely, yet quite profoundly, the work of the Triune God!**

Let’s un-pack each component part:

1. ***Because God*** *(the Father)* ***chose you as the firstfruits to be saved*.** The Greek word translated chose is **αἱρέομαι** (hahee-reh’-om-ahee). It means to **prefer**, to **choose**, to **take to oneself**.

**Firstfruits:** Possibly first generation of believers, or the firstfruits in Macedonai and Thessalonica.

Some versions translate not as firstfruits, but “from the beginning”:

NASB(95): *“But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” (2Th 2:13 NASB95)*

Holman: *“But we must always thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.” (2Th 2:13 HCSB)*

NKJV: *“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,” (2Th 2:13 NKJV)*

**This aligns:** *“3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Eph 1:3-6 ESV)*

**Vs 13 - *To be Saved* –** The Greek word is **σωτηρία** (so-tay-ree’-ah). It is where we get the study of salvation. It means to delivered from one’s enemies, preserved, and kept safe.

Here again, as Paul often does, highlights the mystery that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, **to be saved!**

**OK, one more point about the Triune God*!***

*“****18*** *And Jesus came and said to them, "****All authority*** *in heaven and on earth has been* ***given to me****.* ***19*** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Mt 28:18-19 ESV)*

**Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. It was “given” to him. By Whom and why?**

*“****5*** *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* ***6*** *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* ***7*** *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* ***8*** *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* ***9*** *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* ***10*** *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,* ***11*** *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Php 2:5-11 ESV)*

1. **Vs 13 a - Because you are beloved by the Lord** (God the Son)

Let this sink in, Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead loves you!

Warts, freckles, flaws, oddities, abnormalities, idiosyncrasies, quirks, imperfections, failings, blemishes, and weaknesses. God the Son loves you!

*“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (Joh 15:13 ESV)*

The Greek word translated **“beloved”** is: **ἀγαπάω** (ag-ap-ah’-o). It is that **selfless love**, that **unconditional love**, that God loves His children with.

As Paul warned about the truth rejectors,Paul now reminds the believers that they are **“loved by the Lord.”**

**Point #2,** Paul is saying we must now and continually give thanks to God for other believers and ourselves because we are loved by the Lord!

1. **Because our salvation is through sanctification and belief in the truth,** all the areas where the Holy Spirit (God the Holy Spirit) works in our lives.

As a believer, God justified us the moment we placed faith in Jesus Christ we were justified, and the work of sanctification commenced, and it will not end until we go home, or the Lord comes to get us.

Sanctification ultimately ends at the **coming of the Lord** when believers receive their glorified bodies.

**Saved through sanctification (by the Spirit) and belief in the truth (which by the way is also by the Spirit.** The Greek word for sanctification is **ἁγιασμός** (hag-ee-as-mos’). **Holiness or set apartness**

*“1 ¶ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 ¶ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” (1Jo 2:1-6 ESV)*

**And *Belief in the truth –*** Keep in mind, the last group we looked at were characterized by their rejection, of the truth. You and I are to praise God, for the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirt and that we have believed the truth!

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (Joh 14:26 ESV)*

**Vs 14 -** Now this salvation, God called you to through the gospel. That is the method that the call of salvation goes into the world.

Through ***“our gospel.”*** Here we see how Paul identifies with the gospel. It is ***our gospel***.

We have talked about this, the word gospel is **εὐαγγέλιον** (yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on). It means the **good news**, the **glad tidings of the Kingdom**.

End game – That we would ***Obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Paul wrote this to the church in Rome:

*“15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 ¶ and if children, then heirs —  heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Ro 8:15-18 ESV)*

This to the church in Ephesus:

*“15 ¶ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,” (Eph 1:15-18 ESV)*

**Vs 15 - So then, Brothers ἀδελφός** (ad-el-fos’).

**Stand firm. – στήκω** (stay’-ko) – The idea is of **not giving ground**, of **persisting**, of **persevering**!

 *“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” (1Co 16:13 ESV)*

*“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,” (Php 1:27 ESV)*

*“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.” (Php 4:1 ESV)*

**Vs 15 b –** Here Paul is referring to teaching that came directly from Paul and his fellow colleagues.

1. **Spoken word.** This would refer to the time when Paul was with them. The three weeks or so where he was teaching them.
2. **Letter.** This refers to letters they received from Paul

**Vs 16 -** Notice the conjunctive relationship Lord Jesus Christ – God our Father. Both the name and the relationship reminding us that Jesus is God.

**Loved us -** Aorist tense, so although it sounds like he loved us in he past. In the Greek the verb is considered without regard to past, present, or future. **God loves us… That is the idea!**

**Gave us eternal comfort –** This is everlasting encouragement, unending comfort, unending consolation, or everlasting solace, this is one of the realities of the gospel, you and I have been given eternal comfort.

And he gave us… ***Good hope through grace –*** The idea is unfailing hope. **We have unending encouragement and unfailing hope in the gospel of Christ!**

**A hope that will not leave us ashamed, but an unfailing hope!**

**Vs 17 -** So, Paul prays that the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father:

1. ***Comfort your hearts***
2. ***Establish them in every good work***
3. ***Establish them in every good word.***

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**Points of Application for Life**

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