



A few weeks ago, we began a series called "Advent." As we celebrate the advent season of anticipating the birth of Jesus, our study in 2 Thessalonians draws our attention to look forward to the return of Christ. Last week, we discussed the coming judgment of God at Christ's return. 2 Thessalonians chapter one details how hell is a real place. While the return of Christ is a thing of joy and rest for the believer, it is a horrifying reality for the unbeliever. Today, we turn the page to chapter 2, which will continue to unfold the story of the end times. If you're unfamiliar with the end times, this passage will help you as you continue to put the pieces together in your mind. If you're more familiar with the end times, this passage serves as another great reminder of what is coming and provides clarity in our lives as we wait for Jesus' return.

Key Passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back at your notes, what encouraged or challenged you the most from the sermon?
2. How can we stay steadfast in our faith today, considering the warning against being easily shaken or alarmed mentioned in verse 2?

Satan's goal has been the same from the very beginning: deceive God's people. We see this occur in the garden in Genesis and throughout the Bible in countless other ways. The foremost way God's people can remain unshaken and steadfast is to know God's Word. Remember these words from the Psalmist: Blessed is the man who delights "in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away" (Psalm 1).

3. Reflecting on the concept of "the man of lawlessness," how can we discern and guard against deceptive influences in our lives, as suggested in verses 3-4?

At the outset of chapter 2, Paul tells the Thessalonian believers not to be upset, troubled, or deceived. Paul exposes the root of their anxiousness: forgetfulness. In the face of an alarming message from false teachers, the Thessalonians had lost sight of the truth Paul had previously taught them about Christ's second coming in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. "Their physical and emotional stress was uncalled for since it resulted from a lie. We can learn from the Thessalonians' mistake. Think about how many times we allow falsehood to steal our joy or rob us of peace" (Christ Expository Commentary, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, pg. 220). The only way believers can maintain peace in any trial is to know God's promises from His Word. How often do we allow confusion, deception, or uncertainty to rob us?

4. What does today's passage say about the "man of lawlessness"? What will he do? What is restraining him? Who is behind this man's rise to power? How will the battle between good and evil end?

The Antichrist is given the title "man of lawlessness" because he will oppose in every way the biblical God and His law. He will be completely lawless. Daniel 7 speaks of this man as a "boastful" king who will "try to change the set times and the laws" (verses 11 and 25). He will come offering a false peace to the world and will with his charismatic personality, incredible promises, and breathtaking miracles unite all nations politically, economically, and religiously under his leadership. At the same time, he will make a covenant with Israel for three and one-half years (cf. Daniel 9:27, where "seven" indicates seven years). In the middle of the seven years, the man of lawlessness will break his covenant with Israel, stop their sacrifices (Daniel 9:27), and enter the temple to set himself up as "god" and demand worship (2 Thessalonians 2:4). This is the "abomination that causes desolation" that Jesus spoke of in Mark 13:14. By possessing and controlling the Antichrist, Satan is worshiped in the temple where the biblical God is to be worshiped. No wonder the Antichrist is called the man of lawlessness. To act as "god" is the ultimate rejection of the biblical God's character and laws.

This action of the Antichrist will cause an upheaval in his worldwide kingdom, and forces from the East will gather to fight against him. But instead of fighting each other, the forces of the world unite to fight the King of kings and Lord of lords, who comes to put down the man of lawlessness and his allies in the great battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16; 19:19). Of course, the man of lawlessness loses that battle. He and his false prophet are then cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). The Word of God (Revelation 19:13), Jesus Christ, will be the Victor.

(<https://www.gotquestions.org/man-of-lawlessness.html>)

5. Verse 10 emphasizes the idea of people perishing because they refused to love the truth. How can we cultivate a love for truth in our lives?

Satan will deceive people with false wonders. Miracles are a powerful tool. Jesus used miracles, which showed people His power and convinced many to believe in Him. Satan is probably the world's best copycat. He knows that signs and miracles persuade people, and he uses these as one of the weapons in his arsenal to deceive. A lot of people will look at the miracle and believe the message that is preached because of the miracle. We must not believe someone or something just because of a sign. A dream, a vision, or a healing is not enough to guarantee that what is happening is the "Lord's work." How can we know if it is God's work? We must evaluate the message that is being taught and compare it to the Word. This doesn't mean we should automatically reject miracles, either. God is still at work in the world and does miraculous things. But we must learn to do as John tells us in 1 John 4, and that is to "test the spirits."

<https://studyandobey.com/inductive-bible-study/thessalonians-studies/2thessalonians2-9-17/>

6. Verse 11 speaks of God sending a powerful delusion to those who reject the truth. In what ways does this passage challenge us to prioritize seeking and embracing God's truth in our lives?

God will send a deluding influence – Remember that a major reason for the tribulation is for God to send His judgment upon the world for rejecting Christ. God will do many miraculous signs, and yet people will still not believe. I believe they will reject God on their own multiple times, and then after going past the limits of God's patience, God will delude them so that they will be judged for their own willful rejection.

It might help to remember the story of Pharaoh. If you look through the first few chapters of Exodus, you will notice that God told Moses He would harden Pharaoh's heart in order to judge the Egyptians. Then as you read through the story, you will see that Pharaoh hardened his own heart multiple times. After these numerous times of self-hardening, the Bible then says that God hardened his heart. In other words, Pharaoh was entirely culpable for his own actions. It is not the picture of someone who desperately wants to turn to the Lord, who in turn vengefully responds, "Never!"

Instead, it is the picture of someone who hates and despises God, willfully rejecting revelation over and over again. Then finally, God says, "Enough is enough. You will be punished."

<https://studyandobey.com/inductive-bible-study/thessalonians-studies/2thessalonians2-9-17/>

7. How should anticipating Christ's return influence our daily actions and priorities? What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?