

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



2 T H E S S A L O N I A N S

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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2 Thessalonians

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Could This Be the Year?

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: December 26, 1993

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:4–12

Outline

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- I. The Sovereignty of His Coming
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Introduction

Take God's Word and turn to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, and we're going to read verses 4 through 12. Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back. He's coming back in power and great glory. Paul tells us that, in the last days, we will know trouble, and heartache, and persecution. And if you think that it's going to be easy, in the days just before Jesus comes, to be a Christian, you're wrong. The noose will be tightening around us. We'll look like we'll have no way out.

As a matter of fact, I think we ought to begin reading in verse 4: *"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us,"*—that is, if you're knowing difficulty and heartache and tribulation by being a Christian, just commit it to the Lord—*"when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power when he shall come to be glorified in his*

saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:4–12).

I. The Sovereignty of His Coming

Jesus is coming again. I love to preach on the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And first of all, I want you to think of the sovereign Lord who is coming. Think of the sovereignty of His coming. In verse 7, He is called, *the Lord Jesus* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). He’s going to be revealed to this world as the Lord Jesus. His deity is going to be openly displayed. The Bible calls His coming an *apocalypse*. An *apocalypse* means, “an unveiling.” His deity and Godhead will be shown.

You see, He is the God-Man, and His name, as we’ve studied this Christian season, means, “Jehovah saves.” That’s a translation of the name *Jesus*—it is, “Jehovah saves.” You know, I trust you know that the name *Jehovah* is the most sacred name that the Jews had for the Almighty. It’s used over 7,000 times in the Old Testament. A pious Jew would never speak that word in audible terms. When he would be reading the Scripture, and come on the word *Jehovah*, why, he would just stop, and bow his head, and worship. If he were a scribe translating the Scriptures, when he would come to the word *Jehovah*, he would put down the pen, and get a brand new pen just to write that name *Jehovah*. And the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament is the *Jesus* of the New Testament. And the very name *Jesus* means, “Jehovah saves.”

Now we have these who call themselves *Jehovah’s Witnesses*. Friend, if they’re not witnessing about Jesus, they’re not witnessing about Jehovah. Jehovah and Jesus are one and the same. Here’s a wonderful passage. I love it. It’s found in Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 10. Don’t turn to it. I’ll be past it before you get it. Write it down. Here God speaks of the last days, when the nation Israel will come to believe in Him. The scales will fall from their eyes. And God makes a marvelous prophecy here in Zechariah. He says, “*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications:*”—every time I go to the Holy Land, I think of this verse, and it moves my heart to think that, in the last days, God is just going to pour out “*the spirit of grace and supplications*” upon these people. And He says—“*and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,*”—now, who is saying this? Jehovah is speaking in the Old Testament. Can Jehovah be pierced? How can you pierce a Spirit? But He says—“*and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn*” (Zechariah 12:10). Oh,

how they will weep, when they finally realize that Jesus is the pierced Messiah. He is the Jehovah that saves.

And you see, if anybody ever comes to your door, as they are want to do, and they want to talk with you about religion, before you talk with them about anything else, you talk with them about Jesus. And if they're wrong about Jesus, it doesn't matter what they may be right about, amen? And the key question is—ask them this: “Do you worship Jesus? Do you worship Jesus?” They say, “Well, we believe in Jesus.” Say, “No, no, no. Do you worship Jesus?” Well, they say, “We admire Jesus.” “No, do you worship Jesus?” They can either say, “Yes” or “No.”

Now if they say, “No, we do not worship Jesus,” you can say, “Then you're not a Bible Christian; because, in the Bible, they clearly worshiped Jesus.” But if they say, “Yes, we do worship Jesus.” You can tell them that the Bible commands that we worship none other than God Himself. Do you understand the point? Is it clear to you? You see, Revelation chapter 19 and verse 10—the Apostle John is having a revelation of the glory of the Lord, and an angel is there giving John this revelation; and, John says, “*And I fell at his feet to worship him*”—to worship the angel. “*And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God*” (Revelation 19:10). That's what the angel said. If you worship anything or anybody other than God, you are guilty, friend, of aiding and abetting the worst sin that the Bible can mention, other than the sin of unbelief, and it is the sin of idolatry.

Jesus is coming back, and His deity will be unveiled; His Lordship will be manifest. And what a day that will be! The first time He came, He came to die in the sinner's place. When He comes again, He will come to execute judgment upon the sinner. When Jesus came the first time, He came on a ministry, and a mission of love and grace. When He comes again, He is coming in vengeance. And this verse says, “*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not...Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Look at it in verse 8: “*In flaming fire taking vengeance.*”

You see, the first time, our Lord came in humility. When He comes again, He's coming in power. The first time He came, He came as the lowly Nazarene, walking in sandaled shoes. When He comes again, He's coming as King of kings and Lord of lords. When He came the first time, He was despised and rejected of men. When He comes again, He will be admired in all them that believe. He will be glorified, “*When he shall come to be glorified in His saints*” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). When He came the first time, He wore a robe of shame. He's coming again to wear a robe of glory. He wore, the first time, a crown of thorns. He's coming again with a diadem of glory. And so who is coming? The Lord Jesus Christ is coming. Now that's the sovereignty of it.

II. The Surety of His Coming

I want you to notice the surety of it. Look again, in verse 7: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Not *if*, but *when*. Well, when is He coming? When is He coming? I don’t know, and you don’t know. I can tell you this much: He’ll be on time. He’ll be on time. Jesus is never ahead of time; He is never late. As a matter of fact, the Bible says that His coming is like the sunrise. In Malachi chapter 4 and verse 2, he says, *“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun”—s-u-n*. That’s a synonym for the Son—S-o-n—*“of righteousness arise with healing in his wings”* (Malachi 4:2).

The Second Coming of Jesus is going to be like the sunrise. Now the sunrise comes on time. It’s never a moment late. It’s never a moment early. It comes exactly, precisely as God Almighty has programmed all of the planets that move in orbit around our sun. And Jesus is like the sunrise. You can’t hurry the sunrise. You cannot keep the sunrise from coming. You see, when Jesus died, as it were, He left this world, and it was like the sun went down. And the only light of the world now is the reflected light of the moon. In this analogy, then, our Lord, who is the Sun of righteousness, gives His light to the moon, and the moon reflects that light on the earth. And so we’re in a night, and the sun has gone. But as surely as the sun has gone, the sun will rise again. And Jesus is coming like the daybreak.

And one of these days, He’s going to step out of Heaven, He’s going to pull back the curtain of night, He’s going to pin it with a star, and He’s going to flood this world with His glory. Christ is coming again. So many people say, “Well, why hasn’t He come? Why has it been so long?” Well, 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 4 says that, in the last days, some will come, saying, *“And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”* (2 Peter 3:4). But he goes on to say, in 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 8: *“But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”* (2 Peter 3:8). In God’s timepiece, in God’s calendar, our Lord has only been away for two days. There is the surety of His coming, of when He shall come.

III. The Splendor of His Coming

Now I want you to notice the splendor of His coming. Listen to this, and I love it—verse 10: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe...”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

A. His Transforming Power

What is going to give Him glory in that day? Well, His saints are what will give Him

glory. Now not the sun, the moon, and the stars; not the universe—that doesn't give Him any real glory. It declares the glory of God. It shows His power. But the major glory is you, and me, and the church. What will give Him glory, when He comes again, is His saints.

And how will we glorify Him? Well, we will glorify Him because in us is manifest His transforming power. Many of us were stubborn and God-haters; but, we were transformed by His grace and His love. Many of us were ignorant and blind, but He opened our eyes, and revealed Himself to us. Many of us were demonized by forces and powers of lust, and drugs, and alcohol, and were made pure. And when you see the saints, when Jesus comes, when you see all of the saints—everybody in this congregation who's saved—when you see us as we have been transformed by the grace of God, without spot, without wrinkle, righteous and faultless, standing before Him, that will give Him glory.

We're going to come in glorified bodies. Our bodies are going to be made like unto His glorious body. First Corinthians chapter 15, verse 42: *"So also is the resurrection of the dead"—speaking of the body. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."* (1 Corinthians 15:42). And verse 49 says, *"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"* (1 Corinthians 15:42).

When you see the saints of the ages—not as we are now, but as we will be—what glory that will give the Lord Jesus! Did you know there's coming a day when we will be just like the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He the Son of God? Then we will be sons and daughters of God. Is He perfect? Then we will be perfect. Is He exalted? Then we will be exalted. Is He prophet, priest, and king? Then we will be prophet, priest, and king. We shall be like Him. We will shine, resplendent in glory. Not one vestige of sin can be found in the saints at that time—not one blemish, not one fault. I love the verse that says, "The sins of Jacob shall be sought for and shall not be found" (Jeremiah 50:20). He's going to present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Ephesians 5:20). And when Heaven's choir sings, "Here Comes the Bride," and the Church rises to meet Him, we will be the source of His glory.

So many times, I have stood down here at the front of this church, and watched these grooms as they see their bride come down that aisle. I watch their face. I want to see the bride, but I want to see the groom. And I see that man, as he sees his bride coming. For that man, she is glory. And what glory it will be for the Lord Jesus, when He sees His bride!

Yes, listen. The transforming power of His grace will give Him glory.

B. The Saving Power of Grace

And I tell you, we're going to be glorified, not only by His transforming power, but by the saving power of His grace. Look again, if you will, in this verse: *"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe..."* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). How did we get to be a saint? By joining the church? By being baptized? By giving our money? No.

We got to be a saint by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that brings Him glory. The Bible says that it is "the glory of His grace that gives Him praise" (Ephesians 1:6). Look, in verse 12: *"That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 1:12).

How is grace made real to us? We just simply believe. There cannot be a saint to be glorified apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You put your faith where God put your sins—on the Lord Jesus Christ—and you become a saint. You say, "Well, I can't believe on Jesus." That's a lie. You could, if you wanted to, because God will give you the faith. No one can ever have the excuse that it is impossible for him to believe, because God will enable anyone to believe who wishes to believe. The mother sin—the father sin, the parent sin of all sins—is unbelief. John 3, verse 18—the Bible says, *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed"* (John 3:18).

Now look in verse 10: *"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe..."* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). If you're here tonight, and wanting to be saved; if you're listening on the radio, and want to be saved, let me tell you how. It's gloriously simple. It's simply glorious. Romans 10:9–10: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* It is the transforming power of our God that makes us saints that glorifies the Lord Jesus. It is His amazing grace that glorifies the Lord Jesus. It is His keeping power that glorifies the Lord Jesus.

Look, in verse 10, again: *"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired"*—now, watch this next little word—*"in all them that believe..."* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Everyone that believes will be there. Not any of them will have perished. The little ones and the great ones, they will all be there. He will not lose one of those that have believed. That's the reason I believe in the eternal security of the believer. Jesus said, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand"* (John 10:27–28). When He comes, He's coming to be glorified in all that believe.

Now suppose you had your Christmas yesterday, and there was a great feast, and you had your loved ones around your table, as I had my loved ones around my table. And then, suppose there was a little girl in that family, and you looked around, and somebody said, “Where is Mary? Has anybody seen Mary? Where is Mary?” “Well, Mary is not here.” “Well, where is Mary? What has happened to Mary?” You’ve called her, and she doesn’t answer.

What happens to that feast? What happens to that dinner, when that child is not there, and that child, that little one, cannot be found? You don’t sit and feast any more. You don’t fellowship any more. You don’t sit around the table and laugh. No, one of the little ones is gone. And what if that child, by tragedy, has perished? Is there rejoicing, then? No.

Friend, I want to tell you there’ll be rejoicing in Heaven, because not one will perish—not one, not a one. He is coming to be glorified in all that believe—the smallest child, the strongest person.

You see, the glory of a good shepherd is that none of his sheep are lost.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,

I will not, I will not desert to his foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,

I’ll never, no never, no never forsake! (John Keith)

Our Lord says, in Malachi chapter 3, verse 17: *“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him”* (Malachi 3:17).

C. Giving God Glory

Now He’s going to be glorified in us. But who will give Him glory? I mean, the Bible says that we’re going to be the display.

Peter Lord told me one time, “Adrian, when I go to Heaven, I’m such a failure—I’ll have to slip in the back door.” I said, “No, Peter, you’re going to come in the front door as a trophy of grace—as a trophy of grace—because of what God has done in your heart, and in your life.” He’s going to be glorified in us.

1. We Will Give Him Glory

But who is it that will give Him the glory? Well, I tell you who, first of all, will give Him glory: We’ll give Him glory, won’t we? All of the saints will give Him glory. When we see ourselves made like Him, transformed in His likeness, 10,000 hallelujahs will burst from our lips, as we praise our Lord. We’ll cause the courts of Heaven to ring, and say, “O Lord Jesus, hallelujah! I admire You. I glorify You. I praise You.”

2. The Angels Will Give Him Glory

I’ll tell you who else will glorify Him: The angels will glorify Him—the angels that

announced His birth, the angels that have desired to look into this thing called *salvation*, the angels that have wondered that their Lord would leave Heaven, and come to this earth. The angels will be there, and they will marvel and praise, as they see the Lord of glory step from the lofty heights of Heaven, as they see their beloved Prince, as He comes to this earth to receive His own. They will worship, and wonder; and shouts shall rise, and the orchestra of Heaven will play.

I love that song that talks about the courts of Heaven ringing, as the angels sing. But then, the phrase says,

But when I sing redemption's story,
they will fold their wings,
For angels never felt the joys
that our salvation brings. (Johnson Oatman, Jr.)

But the angels are not who have been saved, because angels—so far as I know—cannot enjoy salvation. They're either saved or lost, or they're either holy or unholy. Let's put it that way. But those angels will praise the Lord.

3. Satan Will Give Him Glory

I'll tell you who else will praise the Lord: Satan himself—Satan himself will give Him glory, in that day. You say, "No, Pastor—not Satan." Yes, Satan will glorify our Lord. Listen to this verse, in Philippians chapter 2, verses 9 through 11—speaking of Jesus: *"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"*—now listen to this—*"that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:9–11). One of these days, Satan will say it. Not that he will be redeemed, but he will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, when He comes again to be glorified in His saints. The Bible says, *"Every knee shall bow...and every tongue shall confess to God"* (Romans 14:11).

Satan will be there. Satan will see that not one is lost, not one small sheep has been snatched away. The warrior that fell on the battlefield, defending the name of Jesus, now has been raised, more than a conqueror. And what despair for Satan, as he sees the triumph of the Lamb!

4. The Unsaved Will Give Him Glory

I'll tell you who else will give Him praise that day: Not only will the saints do it. Not only will be angels do it. Not only will Satan do it. But every unsaved man, woman, and boy and girl upon the face of this earth will see His glory, and then be banished. Look, in verse 9—it speaks of those, *"who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"* (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

When Jesus was going to be crucified, He was on that gory road that we call the *Via*

Dolorosa, carrying His cross. There were some women who were weeping. And Jesus said one of the most poignant things in the Bible to them. Jesus said, “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves” (Luke 23:28); “this is your hour” (Luke 22:53); “mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4). I love that, because that tells me His hour is coming. It may be this year that His hour will come—when our Lord shall reign.

I often tell you what my favorite verses are in the Bible; and, from time to time, they migrate. But tonight, let me give you my favorite. 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 15 and 16. It speaks of the Lord Jesus, and it says this: “Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:15–16). Our Lord is going to be glorified in that day, when He comes. There’s the sovereignty of His coming. He’s coming as King of kings and Lord of lords. There’s the surety of His coming. He will come. There’s the splendor of His coming. He is coming to be glorified to show who is the one and only potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

IV. Sharing His love

The last thing that I want to bring to your attention is this: In the light of all of this, what should we be doing? You know, if you believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, you don’t prove it by saying “Amen” when the preacher preaches, or by making notes in your Bible. Do you know what you prove it by? You prove it by sharing His love. Notice verse 10, again: “When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe”—why did they believe? Look at it—“(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). *The true proof that you believe that the coming of Jesus is imminent is not that you have your head in the clouds of prophecy, but that you have your feet on the pavement of witnessing and soul winning.*

Here was the Apostle Paul, an insignificant little humped-back Jew with weak eyes, a tentmaker by profession, and yet, he was the one who went to Thessalonica, and began this church, and preached Christ, and these people got saved. When Paul went to the city of Thessalonica, they were heathen. They were lost. They were on their road to Hell. And now Paul says they’re saints, because they believed his testimony. He told them of Jesus, and they believed in Jesus, and they got ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. What a joy to win souls for Christ! As I read this, and I looked at it, it put me under conviction. It makes me want to be a soul winner. Every so often, I will win a person to Christ, and that person will be a significant person in the eyes of the world; every so often, maybe a person who is well known. And I’m thinking of someone now

whose name I cannot even share, because of his notoriety. And you lead a person to Christ like that, and you come away, and you say, “Boy, that was something. Thus and such a person got saved.”

As I thought about this Scripture tonight, God brought me under deep conviction. Now we ought to witness to the up-and-out, and we ought to tell the high and mighty about Jesus, but I want to tell you something, folks: A little boy, a little girl, a poor person, an illiterate person, a person from the wrong side of the tracks—you lead them to Jesus, and you know what’s going to happen? One day, you will see that person with greater power, and glory, and splendor than one of the angels. You will see that person shining as a jewel in the Savior’s crown. There are no insignificant people. There are no little people, if you see them in the eyes of the gospel.

If you can’t win a man, win a woman. If you can’t win a white person, win a black person. If you cannot win an adult, win a child. If you cannot win a rich person, win a poor person. If you can’t win your neighbor, win somebody else’s neighbor. Tell them the gospel. And when they believe, they will be saved. And when Jesus comes, they will give Him glory. And you can never even begin to imagine what the most insignificant person on this earth will be like, when they’re made like Jesus. Oh, what a glory it will be! And the test, I say, is are you giving your testimony? Are you sharing the Lord Jesus Christ?

Conclusion

Let’s bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. Father, we do believe that this could be the year that You come. We don’t know, Lord. We can’t hurry the sunrise, but we can’t stop it. And Lord, we’ve heard that the darkest hour of the night is just before the dawn; and so, we believe that, Lord, You’re on Your way. And Father, I pray, tonight, that those without Christ in this building will be saved. In His wonderful, holy name. Amen.

Our Coming King

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: August 11, 1991

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10

Outline

Introduction

- I. The *Who* of the Second Coming
- II. The *When* of His Coming
- III. The Wonder of His Coming
 - A. He Will Be Glorified in His Saints
 - 1. Because of His Transforming Love in Us
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 - 3. Because of His Keeping Power over Us

Conclusion

Introduction

Y^{es},

The clouds [will] be rolled back [like] a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul. (Horatio G. Spafford)

We are talking about that day when our Lord shall come again. And this morning is the last in our series of messages from 1 and 2 Thessalonians on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ: “Our Coming King.” The Lord shall descend.

Would you take God’s Word and turn to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1; and, in a moment, we are going to begin reading in verse 7—2 Thessalonians chapter 1. You know, that’s going to be a great, great contrast between the first coming of our Lord and His Second Coming. When Jesus came the first time, He came to die for the sinner. He poured out His blood for our redemption. But when He comes again, He’s not coming as redeemer; He is coming as ruler. He is coming to reign, in righteousness and in judgment. The first time He came, He came in love and grace. But when He comes again, He’s coming in vengeance—to take vengeance against those who know not our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The first time He came, He came in humility—the lowly Nazarene. But when He comes again, He is coming in great, great power, as King of kings. The first time He came, He was despised and rejected of men. When He comes again, He will come to receive the power and the glory that is due to His name. No longer will He wear a crown of thorns, but He will wear a diadem of glory.

I want you to see how God describes it here—verse 7: “*And to you who are*

troubled...” Hey, you having any trouble? Are you? There are three categories of people here: those who are in trouble, those just getting out of trouble, and those just fixing to get into trouble. That’s who is here. This is a message to you. *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God,”*—do you know him? He’s coming to take vengeance on them that know not God—*“and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8). Have you obeyed the gospel? Have you repented of your sins? Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? If not, look in verse 9: *“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”* (2 Thessalonians 9–10). I love this passage of Scripture, because it speaks of two things: it speaks of judgment for those who know not our Lord Jesus Christ, and of glory and joy for those who do know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some years ago, a minister in Florida had to meet some friends there at the train station. And he put his friends—or, at least, put some friends—on a train. And after he put the friends on the train, and bid them farewell, he stayed there just to watch for a while. And another train came in, and he just watched—just a student of human nature. And he saw, when the train came in, and people got off the train, he watched those glad reunions. He saw mothers and fathers, as they would go and embrace children who had been riding that train. He saw husbands and wives, as they would meet—husbands coming back from business trips—and what a glad reunion there was. He saw sweethearts, as they would embrace and caress, as they often do. Many times when Joyce and I get off of an airplane, I just stop there in the terminal, and stop and kiss her, because, you know, somebody thinks she came to meet me. It just gives me an extra chance there to lay one on her. And people just do that. You know, they just embrace. And they have a wonderful time there, meeting one another. And he, being a student of human nature, watched that, and he saw that glad embrace.

But after a while, the crowds were gone. And then, people began to get on the train. And everybody had gotten on the train; except, he saw a small group. He looked over there, and there was a man in handcuffs. And his handcuffs had a chain on them that went over to another man. And that chain was attached to another man. And this man had a policeman in front of him, and a policeman in back of him, and a policeman on this side, and a policeman on that side. And they were putting him on the train to take him to prison.

And there was a young wife who was there, and a little girl who was there. And this preacher just watched for a while. And as they made their way to the steps, the woman

started, and a policeman held her back, and another said, “No, let her.” And she came, and put her arms around the neck of her husband, and just wept on his shoulder. The little girl who was there got her daddy by the knees, and she began to cry. And she said, “Don’t let them take my daddy! Please don’t let them take my daddy! Please don’t let them take my daddy!” But after a while, one of those policemen took the arms of that woman from around the neck, and gently removed that weeping little girl. And that preacher said, “I saw them as they went up the stairs of that train, and I thought, ‘Just one train. To so many people, it brought joy and happiness and reunion. But the same train brought sorrow and separation and judgment.’” So like the Second Coming of Jesus Christ: one coming.

Oh, He’s coming *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on [those who] know not God, and [who] obey not the gospel of our Lord [and Savior] Jesus Christ”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). But oh, for those who know Him, the Bible says, *“he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe”* (2 Thessalonians 2:10) because of the testimony of the Apostle Paul. Yes, terror for the unsaved; glory for the saved.

Look at the passage, this morning, and notice four things with me, would you, please.

I. The *Who* of the Second Coming

First of which I want you to notice: the *who* of the Second Coming—the *who* of the Second Coming. Who is coming? Well, look in verse 7: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Who is coming? The Lord Jesus. I love that title: *the Lord Jesus*. Sometimes we flippantly call Him *Jesus*; but, my dear friend, you study the Bible, and you will find that He is not called, but one or two times, *Jesus*, in the Bible. He is called *the Lord Jesus—the Lord Jesus*. That’s what He’s called in the Bible. And the name *Lord* tells us that He is the God-man. He is the God-man, not just a man. He is the God-man.

Do you know what His name, Jesus, literally means? It literally means, “Jehovah saves.” Who is Jesus? He is Jehovah. You say, “You mean Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament?” Absolutely. If you were to read the Old Testament, over 7,000 times, the God who created everything is called *Jehovah*. And then, in the New Testament, we have one who is named *Jehovah saves*. When pious Jews in the Old Testament would be reading the Old Testament, and they would come to the name *Jehovah*, they would just bow their head and worship. The congregation would do the same. The name was so, so grand and so glorious that they never pronounced it in audible terms. If a scribe were writing the Bible—they didn’t have printing presses, but if he were copying the Bible—when he came to that name, Jehovah, he would put away that pen, and get a brand new pen, just to write the name: *Jehovah*. And the name *Jesus* means, “Jehovah

saves.”

This past week, some people knocked at our door. They call themselves *Jehovah's Witnesses*. They knocked at our door, two precious girls. And they came, and began to talk, and I said, “Let me say just a word. I want to tell you that I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have been saved, born again, washed in His blood, and I am so grateful to know Jesus, and to know that I’m on the way to Heaven.” And I said, “Do you worship Jesus?” One of them said, “No.” The other said, “Yes.” I said, “Well, get together. Do you worship Jesus?” And the one who had the ascendancy, the one who evidently was the trainer, said, “Yes, we worship Jesus.” I said, “I’m glad to know that you worship Jesus, because then you believe that Jesus is God.” “Oh, no, we don’t believe that Jesus is God.” And I said, “You mean you’re worshipping someone who is not God? Why, the Bible says, *‘I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before me’* (Exodus 20:2–3). “Well,” she said, “we don’t worship Jesus.” I said, “Well, in the Bible, they did. Why don’t you do what they do in the Bible?”

Oh, my dear friend, let me tell you something: if Jesus is not God, Jesus is not good. If Jesus is not God, Jesus is a blasphemer, who allowed people to worship Him. May I tell you dear friend, we are to worship God, and Him alone. And Jesus received the worship of His people. Why did Jesus receive worship? Because the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. And He is the One who will split the skies. The Lord Jesus is coming back again.

When we’re talking about the Second Coming of the Jesus Christ, my dear friend, we’re not just talking about some man who will enter history. We’re talking about God Himself. You must make up your mind about Jesus. You can’t just tip your hat to Jesus. You can’t just talk about Jesus as the humble Galilean or the peasant prophet. No, as one has well said, “Jesus is one of three things: He is Lord, He is liar, or He is lunatic.” Either He is the Lord that the Bible calls Him—the Lord Jesus; or He is a liar, who knew He was not, but pretended to be; or, worse than that, He is a lunatic, who thought He was, and wasn’t. Now which is it? Is He the Lord, or is He a liar, or was He a lunatic? My dear friend, the Bible says the One who is coming is the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is the One who is coming again. And He is coming, the Bible says, to be admired; He is coming to be glorified. Notice, in verse 10: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

One day He is coming—it is going to be His coronation. Today, the Lord Jesus is ignored. In that day, He was spit upon. In that day, they plucked the beard from His cheeks. In that day, they laid the lash upon Him. In that day, they humiliated Him, and stripped Him of His clothing, and hung Him naked on a cross. You won’t walk down this aisle, and acknowledge the Lord Jesus; He hung naked on a cross for you, before a crowd bigger than this. He was humiliated, despised, rejected of men. But friend, when

He comes again, He's coming to be admired. He's coming to be crowned. He's coming to be glorified. And my heart cries, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Revelation 22:20)—*"come, Lord Jesus."*

II. The *When* of His Coming

Second thing I want you to notice: not only the *who* of His coming, but the *when* of His coming. Look in verse 7: *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Look in verse 10: *"When he shall come"* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). *"When he shall come."* It doesn't say, "If He should come." It says, "When He is coming."

Well, when is He coming? No one can set a date. That date and that hour, knows no one (Matthew 24:36). We are to be expecting Him at any moment, but the Bible teaches that He is coming. And the Bible teaches that His coming is like the sunrise—like the sunrise. In Malachi chapter 4 and verse 2, the Bible says, *"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings"* (Malachi 4:2). Now Jesus is the S-o-n, the Son of God; but He is the S-u-n, He is the Sun of righteousness. Now let me tell you something about the sunrise, dear friend. The sunrise never comes ahead of time; it never is late. Isn't that right? The sunrise operates according to the power of God, and the authority of God; and, you can't hurry it up, and you can't stop it. That's the way the Second Coming of Jesus is. That's a time known to God. You can't hurry it up, and you can't stop it.

I heard about a little boy. One night, he went to sleep, tried to sleep, but he stayed up all night wondering where the sun went. Finally, it dawned on him.

Now my dear friend, the coming of Jesus, the coming of Jesus is like the sunrise. *"Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings"* (Malachi 4:2). And one day, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall come with trumpet sound, what He will do, He'll pull back the shade of the night, and pin it with a star; and then, He'll open the door of the glorious morning of His millennial reign, and flood the world with light. And *"the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings."* And if you're in trouble right now, if you're in a night of darkness, and if you're troubled, *"rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed...in flaming fire taking vengeance on [those who] know not God, and [who] obey not the gospel of our Lord [and Savior] Jesus Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8). Oh, when He will come, my dear friend, He will flood your world with sunlight—when He shall come.

Now you say, "Why hasn't He come yet?" Well, because, my dear friend, He's a God of patience and great love. As I preached a few Sundays ago, He's waiting for more people to be saved. I love that passage, in 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 4, when Simon Peter addresses this very question of why Jesus has not yet come. And has He broken

His promise? Peter says, “And some will say, *Where is the promise of his coming? for the since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*” (2 Peter 3:4). But then, Peter says, in 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 8—and listen to it: “*But beloved...*”—listen to it: “*But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” (2 Peter 3:8). So far as our Lord is concerned, it’s only been two days.

I heard about a man who picked that up, and he said, “Lord, is that true—that a thousand years is as one day?” And God says, “Yes, in my sight, that’s true.” He said, “Well then, a thousand years is like just a minute to you.” He said, “Yes, even like a minute, a thousand years.” He said, “Well, Lord, how much is a million dollars to you?” The Lord said, “Just a penny.” “Is that all?” “That’s right.” He said, “Lord, would you give me a penny?” He said, “Just a minute.”

Now friend, listen. God doesn’t measure things like we measure things. You know, with God, there’s no big or little; there’s no near or far. “*One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*” But our Lord Jesus Christ is coming.

III. The Wonder of His Coming

There is the *who* that is coming—the Lord Jesus; the *when* of His coming—when He shall come, who knows, my dear friend? But we know, my dear friend, it is *when* and not *if*. The third thing I want you to notice is the wonder of His coming. Look, if you will, in verse 10: “*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired...*” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Now the word *admired*, look at it very carefully. The Greek word doesn’t mean what we usually mean when we say, “admired.” We talk about the ten most admired men in America, or the most admired sports figure, or whatever. But the word is a richer word than the King James English can portray right here. It literally means, “wonder, awe, dazzling, dazzling awe, absolute splendor, and wonder,” when He shall come. He’s coming, my dear friend, in a dazzling display of His glory that I have called “the wonder of His coming.”

A. He Will Be Glorified in His Saints

Now notice—He is going to be glorified two ways. Look at verse 10: “*When he shall come to be glorified*”—now, look at the first phrase—“*in his saints*” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). It doesn’t say here, He is glorified *by* His saints; He is glorified *in* His saints. What He has done in us will give Him glory.

1. Because of His Transforming Love in Us

For example, He will be glorified, because of His transforming love in our hearts, and in our lives. You think of the people who will be there, swept up to meet the Lord Jesus

Christ—who will be in that crowd? Well, dear friend, there will be people there who were ignorant and blind, and Jesus has opened their eyes, and filled them with His knowledge and His love. There will be people there who were stubborn and rebellious and recalcitrant, people who hated God, and shook their fists in His face, but yet they were conquered by His love, and changed into saints. They will be there. There will be people there who were demonized by lusts, and perverts, and drug addicts, and thieves, and murderers. But they will be there, bright shining as the sun, with their sins forever gone—not one vestige of sin. Can you imagine that crowd? Those who were in ignorance, and those who were in rebellion, and those who were in deep dark sin—all of that gone—transformed by the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And see them there, without spot, without wrinkle, without any such thing, transformed by the grace of God; and that will give Him glory. Aren't you glad that God's in the transforming business? I am.

I heard of a Salvation Army street meeting. There was a man who was giving a testimony of what Jesus Christ had done for him, and there was a heckler on the edge of that crowd. The little street band was out there, and the people were testifying in the street meeting. A heckler was there, and told the man who was giving a testimony, he said, "Would you shut up? You're just dreaming—just dreaming." He felt a tug at his coattail, and a little girl was there, and said, "Sir, that's my daddy up there." Said, "Let me tell you about my daddy. My daddy used to be a drunkard. My daddy spent his paycheck mostly on whiskey. Our house was a terrible place to live. My daddy would come home, and beat up my mommy. We didn't have enough food to eat. I didn't even have shoes to wear to school. Our home was terrible. My mother would cry all day long. But then, my daddy got saved, and my daddy's life has been changed. My daddy doesn't spend his paycheck on liquor anymore. Do you see these shoes? Daddy bought these shoes. Do you see this dress? Daddy bought this dress. See that woman over there? That's my mama. Look at her. See how happy she is? Mister, if my daddy's dreaming, don't wake him up." Amen? "If my daddy's dreaming, don't wake him up."

Let me tell you something, friend, He's going to be glorified in His saints. Hallelujah! What a Savior, who can take a poor lost sinner, and wash him, save him, change him, sanctify him! See, He shall come to be glorified in His saints—in His saints. And by the way, my dear friend, *there are only two kinds of people in the world: the saints and the ain'ts; those who are saved, and those who are not.*

2. Because of His Amazing Grace to Us

Now why will He be glorified? Well, He'll be glorified, because of His transforming love. And He'll be glorified, my dear friend, not only because of His transforming love, but because of His amazing grace. Look, if you will, in this same passage: "*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired*"—now, look at it—"*in all them*

that believe” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Isn’t that amazing? How did these people get transformed? *“In all them that believe.”* It doesn’t say, “In all them that gave their money to church.” It doesn’t say, “In all of them that live good, righteous, clean, holy lives.” It doesn’t say, “In all of them that died a martyr somewhere,” but “all of them that believe.”

Do you know how you are saved? The Bible says it clearly, plainly, sweetly, sublimely, simply, surely, succinctly. Listen to it: *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts 16:31). Isn’t that something? Aren’t you glad God didn’t say, “Everybody who wants to be saved, run around the block.” That sounds simple enough; but some little crippled children can’t run. Aren’t you glad God didn’t say, “Everybody who wants to be saved, read a chapter of the Bible.” That sounds simple enough; but some can’t read. Aren’t you glad God didn’t say, “Everybody who wants to be saved, give \$50.” Some don’t have \$50. But my dear friend, there’s one thing that anybody and everybody can do, and that is *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”* And when He comes, He’s going to come to be glorified in His saints—transforming love, and amazing grace. His saints are the ones who had believed. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”* (Ephesians 2:8). “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound.”

My dear friend, who will be in this crowd? How will He be glorified, when we are there, and we are there like Him, made like our Lord Jesus Christ? He’ll be glorified by His transforming love. He will be glorified by His amazing grace. Oh, thank God for His grace. There won’t be any boasters in Heaven. My dear friend, if you’re there in that day, you won’t be able to boast and strut. You’ll have to give Him the praise and the glory for His grace. The Bible says, in Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 and 9: *“For by grace are ye saved by faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God...lest any man should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9). Friend, you will not be able to boast about getting into Heaven by anything you did. You’ll ascribe all majesty and glory and praise.

I ask them whence their victory came:
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death. (Isaac Watts)

I have a friend, Peter Lord. Peter and I were talking one day. And Peter was having a low day, and he said to me, “Adrian. Oh,” he said, “when I get to Heaven, oh,” he said, “God’s just going to sneak me in the back door.” I said, “Peter, oh no. When God saved you, He did such a job, you’re going to be exhibit number one of His grace.” I said, “You’re coming in the front door, saved by the grace of God.”

3. Because of His Keeping Power over Us

But my dear friend, not only glorified in us because of His transforming love in us, not only because of His amazing grace to us, but because of His keeping power over

us. Look at it again—it gets sweeter and sweeter: *“When he shall come”*—verse 10—*“to be glorified in his saints,”*—that’s His transforming love—*“and to be admired in all them that believe”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10)—that, my dear friend, is His saving grace. But now, the little phrase here, *“admired in all them that believe”*—that’s His keeping power. Not one will have perished. Not one. Everyone who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ will be there. And not one little sheep will be lost—not one. Jesus said, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish”* (John 10:27–28). Oh, His saving power.

Friend, why am I still saved? Why am I still saved? You say, “Well, you must be strong.” Oh, no, He is strong. Why are you still saved? Because, my friend, He is the One who keeps you—*“all them that believe.”* You see, Heaven wouldn’t be complete without all of them there.

I have two of my grandchildren who are coming in a few days to see me; Angela and Rachel are coming. Suppose we invite all of our family over, and we’re all there, and we’re sitting down at the table, and we’re starting. Joyce has fixed a wonderful meal, and we’re holding hands around the table, and we’re starting to say grace, and thank God to have all of our loved ones there. Then, we look up, and someone says, “Where is Rachel?” You know what Rachel means? “God’s little lamb.” That’s what Rachel means. I tell her it means, “warthog.” But anyway—“God’s little lamb.” Suppose now, when we’re sitting around the table, and we’re holding hands, and we’re going to give thanks, and a blessing, and somebody says, “Where’s Rachel?” “I don’t know; where is she?” “We saw her out in the yard.” “Where is she?” “Rachel, come!” “She’s not there.” Well, what’s going to happen? Do you think we’re just going to sit around the table and celebrate? Do you think we’re just going to sit there and feast? No. If one little lamb is missing, there is no family fellowship.

My dear friend, I want to tell you, when we come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, He is going to be glorified *“in all them that believe.”* And not one will be lost. Thank God for His keeping power. What a day that is going to be! But my dear friend, let me tell you: That will give God glory.

Notice, if you will, very quickly—look in verse 10: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe”*—now, why did they believe?—*“(because our testimony among you was believed)”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). How were they saved? By believing. But somebody had to tell them. There was a witness; there was a testimony. There was the Apostle Paul. When the Apostle Paul went to Thessalonica, they were all heathen. And God took a squinty-eyed, little humpbacked Jew, who was a tentmaker by trade—oh, he was a philosopher; he was brilliant in intellect; but, he was so humble he would sew tents in order to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ—and he went into the heathen city, and there he told them of Jesus: the

mighty to save. And they were saved. And Paul said, “You are our crown, you are our glory, when Jesus comes again.”

Friend, I want you to picture that scene. I want you to see Jesus Christ coming again. And you know, the Bible speaks of us as jewels in His crown. Jesus said, in Malachi: *“They shall be mine...in that day when I make up my jewels”* (Malachi 3:17). Suppose you win a soul to Jesus Christ, and when He comes to be glorified, not *by* His saints, but *in* His saints—it’s the saints that bring Him glory: glorified in His saints—and, you’ll look up there, and there in the Savior’s crown is that little boy that you led to Jesus, shining as a diamond. Won’t that be a blessing to you? Oh, when you see that little old man that was sitting on the park bench so lonely, and you sat down beside him, and shared with him the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he was saved—the little whiskered old man; he went off there, dressed in rags, hobbling back to his little dark apartment; but the grace of God came into his heart; and not one of them shall be lost—and, there he is, bright shining as the sun; like Jesus, transformed. Why? Because you cared enough to tell people about Jesus.

Conclusion

When I was in seminary, our president told a story, Dr. Roland Q. Leavell—he said, “I was in a foreign country, and,” he said, “I learned that the king of that country was to come through the streets in a parade.” He said, “I’d never seen a true living king, so,” he said, “I got up early, and I stood on the curb, and I waited, and I waited, and I waited. And the crowds grew, and the crowds grew, and they tried to elbow me out of the way. But,” he said, “I wouldn’t let them.” He said, “I just had my place; I was going to see the king. After a while, I heard a tumult. After a while, I heard the crowd. After a while, I saw the limousine coming; the top was back. There was the king. I was going to see the king. And,” he said, “I looked, and there he was: a man—two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth, hair, suit—just a man. And I thought to myself, ‘How anticlimactic can it be? He’s just a man.’” And he said, “I tried to figure it out—why didn’t it excite me like it excited all of those other people? And,” he said, “I figured it out.” He said, “He wasn’t my king. And he didn’t even know my name.”

Friend, one day, my King is coming. One day, our King is coming. One day, your King is coming. And He will know you by your name. And God’s people say, *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”* (Revelation 22:20). Amen?

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. I wonder, today, if Jesus Christ were to come, if Jesus Christ were to come today, would you be ready to meet Him? Do you know—do you know that your sins are forgiven? He’s going to be glorified in all them that believe—that believe. You’re saved by the grace of God. You’re saved by trusting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

Now my dear friend, that doesn't mean that you just trust Jesus, and live any way you like, and go to Heaven. What a man really believes, he lives by. As a matter of fact, the word *believe* comes from an old English word: *by live*. But what I'm trying to say is, that you don't get to Heaven by being good. You get to Heaven by trusting Jesus. He died for you. Salvation is a gift. And if you'll receive it right now, He'll save you.

If you would, pray a prayer like this: "O God, I'm a sinner, and I am lost. And I need to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me. And You promised to save me, if I would only trust You. I do trust You, Jesus." If you would pray a prayer like that, and mean it with all your heart, He would save you, today. I promise.

Father, I pray that many will come today, and say yes to Christ. In His wonderful name I pray. Amen.

How to Have a Steadfast Hope in a Shaky World

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: October 3, 1999

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; 2:1

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7

Outline

Introduction

- I. You Need Not Be Dismayed
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Introduction

Would you take God’s Word and find 2 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians and we’re going to look in a few moments in the first chapter. 2 Thessalonians, the first chapter.

You know, the stage is set for the drama of the ages, only this drama is not going to be make-believe, it is real. But the problem is we have too many Christians today who are troubled, too many who are jittery, and too many who are unsettled because they are living with sort of last-day hysteria.

Now, obviously we don’t know that these are the absolute last days. The last days, in one sense of the word, began when Jesus ascended because from that time to this time we’ve been living on the edge of eternity. Jesus Christ could come back at any moment, but that has been true for two thousand years. But, God’s people are not to be upset, they’re not to be dismayed, they’re not to be jittery, they are to have a settled faith. So many Christians remind me of a man who swallowed an egg and he was afraid

to move, he was afraid it might break, afraid to sit still, afraid it might hatch. And, I know Christians who are just about that nervous and about that jittery.

Well, we're going to look today into the Word of God and find something that will give us a settled faith in a shaky world. Somebody said, "If you can keep your head when all those round about you are losing theirs, it's just a sign you don't understand the situation." But, it may be a sign that you have a bulldog grip on the Word of God.

Now, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and look if you will in verse 7: *"And to you who are troubled"*—Are you troubled? He's talking to you now—*"And to you who are troubled rest with us"*—that is, settle down, release that tension—*"when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–10).

Now, let's talk about a settled faith in a very shaky world. I want to lay three things upon your heart and I pray God the Holy Spirit will write them indelibly in your heart and etch them today into your consciousness.

I. You Need Not Be Dismayed

Truth number one as we look at this Scripture, you need not be dismayed, you need not be dismayed. Look again, if you will, in verse 7: "...And to you who are troubled rest with us..." (2 Thessalonians 1:7). You say, "But, Pastor, these are dark days." Yes, they are. But, they are gloriously dark, because the darkest hour of the night is just before the dawn.

You see, our hope is not in politics. Everybody's talking politics these days. Our hope is not in sociology, our hope is not in science. Our hope is a sure hope and that is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. The Who of His Coming

Now, notice the who of His coming. It says here in verse 7, look at it again. "...the Lord Jesus..." (2 Thessalonians 1:7). I love that, "...the Lord Jesus..." (2 Thessalonians 1:7). You know, today His lordship is veiled, ignored, and repudiated, but it's going to be revealed. This world *revealed* means, "It's going to be unveiled." People don't understand who He is. They talk about the peasant from Galilee, they talk about the lowly Nazarene. My friend, when He comes again, He is coming as the Lord Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords. And, He's coming to be glorified and He's coming to be admired.

Notice again in verse 10: "When he shall come to be glorified in His saints..." (2

Thessalonians 1:10). Now, when He came the first time, He was spat upon. When He came the first time He was lied on. When He came the first time, He was ignored. And, then worse than being ignored, He was crucified, but when He comes again—and I can hardly wait—He’s going to be crowned and He is going to be glorified. And, at that moment there will be stark terror for those who do not know Him and for those who have not trusted Him. Notice in verse 8: He’s coming “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). The Savior then becomes the judge and men have cursed Him behind His back—they won’t curse Him to His face, I will promise you that.

Now, God takes no delight in this, but God is a holy God and God will punish sin. So, who is coming? The Lord Jesus.

B. The When of His Coming

Think about the *when* of His coming. The Bible says in verse 7, look at it. “And to you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus...” (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Do you see that word *when*? Just underscore it. It doesn’t say, “If.” *When* He is coming.

Now, we don’t know that exact time because that day and that hour no one knows, but we do know there is a time that the Bible calls *when*. Jesus came the first time on time. He was born on time, He died on time, He rose on time, and He’s coming back the second time, on time. Our Lord is never ahead of time. Our Lord is never late.

As a matter of fact, the last book in the Old Testament speaks of the second coming of Jesus, And the book of Malachi tells us in chapter 4 and verse 2 that Jesus is coming as the son of righteousness and it says this, “*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise...*” (Malachi 4:2). And, the word for *sun* there is not S-O-N, but S-U-N, and it’s an analogy. The writer of Malachi says that the second coming of Jesus is like the sunrise, it’s like the sunrise.

Now, let me tell you two things about the sunrise. Number one, you can’t hurry it up, is that not true? Can you make the sun come up early in the morning? You can’t hurry it up. Point number two, you can’t stop it. His coming is like the sunrise. You can’t hurry it and you cannot stop it.

One day at the exact moment Jesus will pull back the shades of night, pin them with a star, and then He will open the door of the morning and flood this world with the sunlight of His coming.

But, it shall come and one of these days the Lord Jesus is going to pull back the shades of night and pin them with a star, open the door of the morning and flood this world with His glory. And, I can hardly wait. When He’s coming, we don’t know, but we know exactly that He is coming.

C. The Wonder of His Coming

Now, think not only of the *who* of His coming and the *when* of His coming, but the wonder of His coming. Look in verse 10: “When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired...” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Underscore that word *admired*. If you have a King James Version of Scripture, actually another translation gives it—the word the idea of “Wonder.” Phillips translates it this way. “It will be a breathtaking wonder to all that believe.” Can you imagine what it would be like if we heard the trumpets sound right now, and I mean we’re swept up? I mean, can you imagine? Just think of it. Can you imagine admiring Him, looking upon Him whose name is wonderful. No wonder we’ll wonder.

1. We Will Wonder at His Transforming Love

Do you know what we’ll wonder at? Friend, we’ll wonder first of all at His redeeming love. Think of what His transforming and redeeming love. He has taken stubborn people like we were and sometimes are. God haters transformed by His love.

Those who were living in ignorance and blindness, we had our eyes open. Those who’d been demonized by the power of lust, and drugs, and immorality have been made pure. What, transforming love this is.

And, look at them—when we’re caught up to meet the Lord, we’re gonna be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And, we’ll look around and we’ll see the saints in their glorified bodies.

Is He perfect? Then we’ll be perfect because we’ll be like Him, the Bible says. Is He exalted? We will be exalted. Is He prophet, priest, and King? We will be prophets, priests, and kings. Does He reign? We will reign with him and every vestige of sin will be removed. No wonder we’ll wonder, when we see the blood-washed saints, that throng we’re caught up to meet the Lord in the air and we look around and we see what He has done.

2. We Will Wonder at His Saving Grace

Not only will we wonder at His transforming love, but friend, we will wonder at His saving grace. Look at verse 10, look at it. “When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in”—now watch this—“all them that believe...” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). He doesn’t say, “All those who did wonderful works.” It doesn’t say, “All of those who gave a lot of money.” It doesn’t say, “All of those who are handsome or educated.” No. We will wonder that we have been saved by His grace.

We just put our faith where God put our sins upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, when we see that blood-washed throng. And, we say, “From whence have they come and, “How did they get here?” They believed in Jesus, they trusted Jesus.

Does that seem too simple to you? Friend, it is gloriously simple and it is simply

glorious. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. I'm so glad I've been able to preach that gospel. I'm so glad that I can hold up this book and say to anybody any place any time, "If you will believe in Jesus, I promise you on the authority of the Word of God He will save you." And, if anybody anywhere any time ever comes to Jesus in repentance of faith and He doesn't save them; I'll close my Bible and never preach again, I can promise you that He will save you.

3. We Will Wonder at His Keeping Power

There will be the wonder of His transforming love. There will be the wonder of His saving grace in all them that believe. And there will be the wonder of His keeping power. Look again in verse 10. He's coming to be glorified "...in all them that believe..." (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Not a one of them will be lost. The same God that saves you is the God that will keep you.

You see, this is going to be a homecoming. Can you imagine a family together for a homecoming, and they're all there, and there's a sumptuous meal on the table. And, there's a lot of laughter, and a lot of joy, and then somebody says, "Well, where's Susie? Has anybody seen Susan?" "Who is Susan?" "Susan is a little child." "Where is Susan?" "Susan is not here." Friend, if one little child were missing, wouldn't that spoil a homecoming?

I'm telling you, friend, when we're caught up, He's going to be admired in all them that believe. Not a one that will be lost.

*that soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will never, no never desert to its foes,
that soul though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

No wonder we're going to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. The Witness of His Coming

And, not only do we see the *who* of His coming, and the *when* of His coming, and the wonder of His coming, but notice we see the witness of His coming. Look again if you will in verse 10 of this same chapter. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe"—now watch this—"because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

When Paul came to Thessalonica, the people to whom he was writing, they were pagans, they were lost, without hope, on their way to Hell. And, he came and testified what Jesus Christ had done for him. You know the proof that you believe the second coming of Jesus Christ is not that you have notes in your Bible, but that you are trying to bring souls to Christ.

I want to tell you something. Come up close, I want to tell you something. I don't

care how much money you give this church, I don't care how faithful you attend, and I don't care how beautifully you sing, how eloquently you may teach. If you're not trying to bring souls to Christ, you're not right with God. You're not right with God. You're not a Spirit-filled Christian.

Jesus said, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me..."* (Acts 1:8). A Christian who doesn't witness is a contradiction in terms. Paul spoke of the coming of Jesus and he said, "These folks are ready because of our witness, because of our testimony."

I was cleaning my garage. I don't get to do that often. It's almost a privilege just to be able to have enough time to do something like that. And I set aside this day, and the garage needed cleaning, and it was a nice day. And, I had the garage door open and an old man came by. And, he walked up to me, and he said, "Mister, you need some help? I need a job. Can I work for you? Would you pay me some?" He was so old, he couldn't help me, and I knew that. And, very frankly I didn't want to be bothered with it.

I said, "No, I don't need any help, thank you." He said, "Well, I need some money." And, I said, "Well, let me give you some money." I reached in my billfold and gave him some money. And, you know, to get rid of him, "Go on, there's some money, go." And, I got back to my work.

The Holy Spirit said, "You didn't tell him about Jesus, you're just trying to get rid of him." I said, "Well, I'm busy." "What's more important? That man or this garage? You didn't tell him about Jesus." I said, "Well, I'm sorry, Lord, I should have, but, he's gone." The Lord said, "You could catch him, you could catch him." And, I knew I had to, and I left, and went on down the street. Said, "Pardon me just a moment. I want to ask you a question. Talked to him about Jesus."

To cut to the chase, he bowed his head with me, and prayed, and gave his heart to Christ, and I hugged him. And, you know, when I hugged that old man, I didn't see an old man there that was down on his luck. I saw a man, a jewel in the Savior's crown. I saw a man made like the Lord Jesus Christ. I saw a man that's gonna be caught up in the rapture and transformed to the likeness of the very Son of God. Do you know one of the greatest privileges we have is to preach the glorious gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And, so what is Paul saying in this first section? He is saying, "You need not be dismayed, you who are troubled, rest with us. God has everything under control." As a matter of fact, I have a motto in my study that says, "Adrian, trust me, I have everything under control."

II. You Need Not Be Deceived

Now, number two. Not only should you not be dismayed, number two, you need not be

deceived, you should not be deceived. Look if you will now in the 2 Thessalonians the 2 chapter and notice how it begins. *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him”—that is the rapture—“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled”—that is, don’t be dismayed—“neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”* (2 Thessalonians 2:1–5). I’m gonna stop reading there for a moment.

But, Paul is saying, “Not only don’t be dismayed, but don’t be deceived.” Look again, chapter 2 verse 3: “...Let no man deceive you...” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Now, put it down big, plain, and straight, the devil is a deceiver. He is a liar, he is the father of all lies, and he has inspired a devilish deception. What had happened, a forged letter had gone out. Somebody had signed Paul’s name to it to deceive the church and they had said that they were teaching that the church was already in the great tribulation. That’s called “The Day of the Lord.” I spoke to you about it last week. And, they were saying, “You Christians have missed the rapture and you’re in the great tribulation. And, it was a lie; it was a devilish lie. Paul is talking about our being gathered “...together unto Him” in verse 1 (2 Thessalonians 2:1). The rapture’s gonna come first, but here was the lie that the day of the Lord is at hand, you’re in the tribulation.

And, so Paul is straightening them out about this. Now, every lie is a lie about the truth, if it’s not a lie about the truth it can’t be a lie. And, so Paul takes the truth that the lie was about and tells them now the truth. And, he explains some things to them about the antichrist that is going to come.

You see, there’s coming an antichrist, the man of sin. He’s going to fling one final insult into the face of heaven’s king.

Now, notice what he says, in verse 3: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). That is, the day of the Lord is not going to come until the antichrist is here.

Now, he’s called here “The man of sin.” He is going to be the epitome of evil. He is Satan’s superman. He will counterfeit the work of God, and like many criminals, he has many aliases. I want to give you some names that he’s called in the Bible. Two of them are found right here.

First of all, he’s called, “The man of sin.” “The man of sin.” That speaks of his character. He is going to be the epitome of evil. He’s going to be the personification of

sin.

You see, history began with the sin of man; it will end with the man of sin. All of the evil of this world will be distilled in the one man. He's called, "The man of sin." Another translation calls this "The incarnation of wickedness." Another translation, "The champion of wickedness." Another translation, "Wickedness in human form." All of these are the same way of saying he's, "The man of sin."

But, also he's called in verse 3, "The son of perdition." Now, what does that mean? Well the word *perdition* means "Judgment," and it speaks there of the judgment that surely awaits him. The only other person in the Bible that's called, "The son of perdition" is Judas. And, Williams translates this "Son of perdition," the one who is doomed to destruction. And, that's the reason why I say Satan sails a sinking ship.

And, then in Revelation chapter 13—and before we get finished with these series I hope we'll get to Revelation chapter 13—he's called there "The Beast." All of these are aliases. Why is he called, "The Beast?" Because that speaks of his ferocity, his cruel, and fierce, and ferocious nature. This man may have the face of an angel, but he has the heart of a beast.

And, then the Apostle John calls him "The antichrist." You can read about that in 1 John, he's called, "The antichrist." The prefix *anti* has two meanings. It means, "Against" and it means, "Instead of." And, the prefix A-N-T-I, *anti* means, "Instead of" and "Against." He's against Christ, but he comes as a substitute for Christ. He's one who opposes Christ. He's one who will be a substitute for Christ. That is, he is the counterfeit Christ.

Now, I want you to get something straight. Jesus could say, "...*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...*" (John 14:9). The antichrist can say the same thing. He is son of his father, the devil. Just as Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, the antichrist will be the devil in human flesh. And, he can say, "He that hath seen me hath seen my father," but his father is the devil.

Now, you have to understand this; that Satan desires worship and he's getting bolder and bolder in these days. And, more and more he's inculcating to himself demonic devilish worship. He wants to receive worship and he will receive that worship through the antichrist. Look if you will in the second chapter and verse 4. It speaks of this man of sin "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God"—Now, that is the anti, he's against God—"or that is worshipped"—But, now here's the *anti* in place of God—"so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Devil has always wanted to be worshipped.

Now, the Bible says that this antichrist is going to come and sit in the temple of God. Well, where is that? Well, the temple of God will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. You say, "Adrian, do you believe the temple will be rebuilt?" Yes, I do. I believe it will be rebuilt by

the antichrist himself.

in Levitical circles right now, the ultra-orthodox are already discussing and considering, whether the time has come to rebuild and erect the temple in Jerusalem. Let me give you an Israeli press release. Quote, “In the ministry of religion, a document concerning this was put forward in which proposals from all over the world were collected. Religious activists are for the erection of the temple as soon as possible. There is some opposition, but everything is urging forth the building of the temple.”

And, then here’s what Israel wire reported, and I quote, “Temple mount activists are stepping up efforts to regain control of the temple mount and begin efforts toward the construction of the third temple.” And, then this article goes on to point out that the money collected would be traded for gold which must be set aside for the time when the construction would get underway.

I have visited in the old city of Jerusalem the Temple Mount Institute, and gone in there to the museum, and seen the artifacts that these are already beginning to make. Silver trumpets for the worship, wash basins for the worship, robes for the priests to wear. They even have a box for the casting of lots, for the scapegoat and all of this, getting ready to reinstitute temple worship. And, this antichrist will make a covenant with Israel and help the temple to be rebuilt there. And, then when the temple is rebuilt, he himself will enter into that temple, and he will show himself that he is God. Of course, he’s not God, but Jesus said in Matthew 24: “*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation...*” (Matthew 24:15) sit in the holy place, then you know that the greatest tribulation ever is about to begin.

Now, notice the antichrist is going to be revealed. Look if you will in verse 3: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed...” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Now, what does that tell us? It tells us that he can be alive and well, but veiled and covered right now. He may be alive today on planet earth. I personally believe he’s going to come out of a reunified Europe, we’ll talk about that later, but he’s going to be revealed. But, until he is revealed there is a spirit working in this world that the Bible calls, “...*The mystery of iniquity...*” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Notice if you will in chapter 2 verse 6: “*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time*”—talking of the antichrist—“*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way*” (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7).

Now, look at this very carefully. Look in verse 6: “*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time*” (2 Thessalonians 2:6). That is, if the antichrist is alive and well today, there’s something that is holding him back. There’s something that is restraining him. It’s as if the devil is on a leash, and you know what “withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time” (2 Thessalonians 2:6). The antichrist cannot come on

the stage until the time that is set. Now notice in verse 7: “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...” (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Friend, if you cannot see the spirit of antichrist in the world today, you’re blind. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth...”—and that’s King James for he who now restrains—“...until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Now, notice if you will in verse 6, there’s a *what*, “And now ye know what withholdeth...” (2 Thessalonians 2:6). Now, notice in verse 7: “...only he who now...” restrains (2 Thessalonians 2:7). There’s a *what* and there’s a *he*. What is the *what*? The *what* is the church. When the church is taken out, the church is a restraint to antichrist, and the church is going to be taken out.

Who is the *he*? The *he* is the Holy Spirit who inhabits the church. Now, when is the church, inhabited by the Holy Spirit, going to be taken out? At the rapture. When the church is taken out at the rapture, when the trumpet sounds, “...and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air...” and to admire him and to be changed and be like him (2 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Then we’re taken out and the restraint is gone.

Did you know that the church is a restraint to the power of evil? Did you know that the Holy Spirit inhabiting His people has Satan on a leash and there are certain things that he would like to do that he cannot do. Study the book of Job. Satan said, “There are things I want to do, but you won’t let me do them.” Speaking to God. One of these days Satan is going to be released. One of these days the restraint will be gone. When is that? When we’re taken out. You know, they don’t like us. They wish we were gone. We are a pain to them. But, the Bible calls us “Salt and light.”

What does salt do? Well, salt preserves. But, what else does salt do? Salt stings, salt irritates. One of these days this preserving, stinging, irritating salt will be taken out. Light, what does light do? We’re the light of the world. Light reveals, as well as produces.

One of these days God’s divine photosynthesis will be taken out, one of these days God’s revealing light will be taken out. One of these days the preaching like I’m doing today will be taken out, and then antichrist will have his way, that man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition, he’s going to come.

And when that happens, when the church is taken out, friend, there will be such a flood tide of lawlessness and wickedness and the world won’t be able to stop it. You might as well try to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks as to stop the flood tide of lawlessness that will come in that day when the church at the rapture is taken out.

Now it doesn’t mean that the Holy Spirit is no longer on earth. Listen, friend, the Holy

Spirit is everywhere, there's no place that God is not. But, what he's talking about is the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will stand aside. And, then the antichrist, the man of sin, will come on the scene.

He will be all of the Hitlers, the Khomeinis, the Saddam Husseins, Napoleons in one. He will be the composite of evil. His intellectual genius will be great. His authority will be overpowering. His hatreds will be extraordinary. His techniques will be superb. Men will be willing to die for him. Women will swoon at his feet. Little children will speak his name with reverence and the whole world will wonder after the beast.

Satan's master plan is tied to Satan's superman. And, we could talk, if we had more time, about how he's going to control the world with commerce and ungodly miracles.

Now, look if you will in 10 and 12 because time is running out on me. It speaks of chapter 2 verses 10 and 12, let's begin in verse 9: *"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders"*—he'll make you believe that up is down, black is white, he'll make you believe that good is evil—*"all power and signs and lying wonders"*—now watch this—*"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thessalonians 2:9–12).

Now, listen to me. Don't you ever plan on getting saved after the rapture. There will be some people saved after the rapture, but not people like you. Not people who have sat in churches like this and heard the gospel preached, heard the plan of salvation presented, and you said, "No, I don't want Him, I don't want Jesus. I have pleasure in unrighteousness." "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12). And, the opposite here of truth is not error, but it is unrighteousness.

A man is presented with the truth, and then he thinks of his sin, and he says, "Well, I don't want the truth, I'm gonna take my sin." And, God says, "And with your sin will be the baggage of unbelief when the church is taken out." And, the Bible says that you will believe the lies of the antichrist.

There are some people saying, "Well, I'm just gonna wait until the rapture and if the rapture happens and everybody else is gone, then I'll just turn and get saved." No you won't. You will believe the lies of the antichrist and you will go unto the great tribulation and then ultimately you will die and go to Hell.

III. You Need Not Be Disappointed

Now, what have we said? And, I must come to conclusion. Paul is saying to these folks,

“Don’t be dismayed.” He’s saying secondly to these people, “Don’t be deceived.” And, he’s saying thirdly and finally, you will not be disappointed. This verse, chapter 2 and verse 8: *“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth...”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). This is talking about the battle of Armageddon, when the wicked, the wicked one, antichrist comes “...the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth...” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). What is that? The breath of His mouth, the same Jesus that spoke them into existence is going to speak them into oblivion. This speaks of the battle of Armageddon.

Remember that the second coming of Jesus Christ is in two stages. First of all, He comes secretly for His church. And, then secondly He comes in sovereignty with His church. There’s a period of seven years in between the Great Tribulation and when our Lord comes, not only in the mystery of the rapture, but the majesty of the revelation. It’s then that antichrist is going to be destroyed. It is then that 777 will take care of 666.

It is then that the Lord Jesus who suffered in shame will come in glory. It is then that Jesus who wore a crown of thorns will wear a diadem. It is then that the one who died in the sinner’s place will come to execute judgment upon those who refuse such love.

He came the first time to seek and to save. He’s coming the second time in judgment. He came the first time in mercy. He’s coming the second time in flaming fire, to take vengeance. He came the first time in humility, He’s coming the second time in incredible power.

Conclusion

Now, my time has gone. What does this mean to you? I’m just gonna give you five things it means to you in statements.

Number one, there’s the intercession factor. You’d better begin to pray.

Number two, there’s the soul-winning factor. If you have men, women, boys, and girls, friends, mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, brothers, sisters without Jesus, share Jesus.

Number three, there’s the family preparation factor. You had better get your children and get them into the Word of God and get them to understand things that are happening today because the spirit of antichrist is in the world and the mystery of iniquity doth already work.

Number four, there is the comfort factor. Friend, don’t be dismayed, don’t go around with headline hysteria.

And, last of all, there is the hope factor. We have a hope that is steadfast and sure. We’re the only ones who really understand what is happening in this day and in this age.

Some people visited a real old church. The building was beautiful. They wanted to

see it. There was a janitor there, they said, “Can we go inside and look in the building.” The janitor said, “Sure, you may go in, the key is in the lock.” And, so the people went over there and they tried to turn the key, they tried to turn the key, they tried to unlock the door, they tried, and tried, and tried. They even took the key out of the lock, took a handkerchief, wiped it off, blew it off, put it back in, but they couldn’t turn the key. And, after a while the old janitor came over and said, “Oh, I’m so sorry, I forgot to tell you. The reason you couldn’t turn the key is the door is already unlocked. Just lift the latch and go on in. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you that.”

Well, friend, I want to tell you this, if you want to be saved, the door is already unlocked. Quit trying and start trusting. Just come as you are and say, “Oh, Lord Jesus, I need you, I’m a sinner, but you’re a Savior. I cannot save myself, but I want to be saved, and right now with all of my heart, like a child, I trust you to save me.” And, friend, when He comes, He’s coming to be admired in all of them that believe and you’ll be one of those, one of those. And, it may be today, just like Emily sang, it may be today.

Let’s bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Begin to pray for those around you who may not know the Lord Jesus. And, if you don’t know Jesus, I want to lead you in a prayer. Would you pray this prayer out of your heart? “Dear God, I am a sinner, my sin deserves judgment, but I need and want mercy. Jesus, you died to save me and you promised to save me if I would trust you. I do trust you, Jesus. I do, right now this moment with my heart. Come into my heart, forgive my sin. I’m sorry for my sin. I repent of my sin, I turn from it to you. Forgive me, cleanse me, save me, Lord Jesus.” Ask Him.

Did you ask Him? Did you? Then by faith pray this way. “Thank you for saving me, Lord Jesus. I receive it right now as the gift of your love. I trust you, you’re now my Lord, my Savior, my God, and my Friend. Begin now to make me the person you want me to be. And, Lord Jesus, I will live for you, not in order to be saved, that’s a gift, but I will live for you because I am saved, and Lord Jesus, help me not to be ashamed of you. Give me the courage to make it public. In your name I pray, Amen.”

The Beginning of the End

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: April 06, 1997

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; 2:1–12

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7

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Introduction

Find, in God’s Word, 2 Thessalonians chapter 7—excuse me, chapter 1—beginning in verse 7—2 Thessalonians chapter 1. And, in a moment, we begin reading in verse 7.

We’re thinking about the beginning of the end. The stage is set for the drama of the ages, and the curtain is about to be pulled back on the end times. I say, “the drama,” but what I’m talking about, precious friend, is not fiction. Today, there are three tremendous truths that I want to lay on your heart concerning the coming of our Lord.

I. You Need Not Be Disturbed

Truth number one—listen to me: You need not be disturbed. Now listen, you need not be disturbed. Look, if you will, in verse 7: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us”*—you don’t have to go around with headline hysteria. There are three categories of people in the world today: those who are afraid, those who don’t know enough to be afraid, and those who know their Bibles. Now, I’m going to talk to you about that third group—*“you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–10).

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the words that I’ve just read to you are packed with incredible truth. What is the hope of this world? It is not politics, not government, not science, not education. I say clearly, without stutter, without stammer, without apology, after having thought about it, knowing it from my heart, the only hope for this world is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—the only hope for this world is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. You say, “Well, Pastor, everything is getting dark.” Yes, it is getting gloriously dark. “To those who are troubled rest with us. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven” (1 Thessalonians 1:7).

A. The *Who* of His Coming: Jesus

Think of the *who* of His coming. Tom and Linda just sang about it. The Lord Jesus is coming. What a day that will be when Jesus is revealed as the Lord of lords and King of kings! Today, His lordship is being covered. Today, His lordship is being veiled. Today, His lordship is being ignored. He came the first time. He came as a lowly Nazarene walking by the shores of Galilee in sandaled feet. When He comes again, He’s coming as King of kings. He’s coming as Lord of lords. He’s coming, according to this passage, to be glorified and admired in His saints (2 Thessalonians 1:10). The One who was despised, the One who was ridiculed, the One who was spit upon, the One who was crowned with thorns, the One who was nailed to that hellish tree, crucified, and buried—that One, Jesus, is coming again. Now, that will be stark terror for His enemies, but what glory, what joy, that will be for the children, the sons and daughters, of God! And, all of God’s saints through the ages, when they think about the Second Coming of Jesus, they just say, *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”* (Revelation 22:20). The *who* of His coming is Jesus.

B. The When of His Coming: On Time

The *when* of His coming—look again in verse 7: “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven*” (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Look at the word *when*: “*when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed*” (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Now, it doesn’t say, “if.” The Second Coming is not a matter of *if*, but *when*. Well, when is He coming? Well, I’ll tell you this much: He is coming on time. The Bible says He came the first time in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4). He was not one second ahead of time, not one second late. And, when He comes again, He will come on time.

Malachi calls the Second Coming of Jesus a “sunrise”—Malachi 4, verse 2: “*unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*” (Malachi 4:2). Now, let me tell you this about the sunrise, friend: you can’t hurry it up, and you can’t stop it. Is that not true? Now, that’s the way the Second Coming of Jesus is: we can’t hurry it up, and we cannot stop it. But, one day, Jesus is going to come. He’s going to pull back the shades of night, pin them with a star, open the door of the morning, and flood the world with the light of His glorious Second Coming. Some golden daybreak, Jesus will come.

C. The Wonder of His Coming

The *who* of His coming: the Lord Jesus. The *when* of His coming: He’s coming right on time. And then, think of the wonder of His coming. Look in verse 10: “*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints*” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Look at the word *glorified*. Actually, the word there is *admired*; it literally, in the Greek language, has the idea of wonder, of awe. What are we going to wonder when we see the Lord Jesus? How will we be so wonderfully awestruck and admired when Jesus comes? You think what we’re going to see.

1. His Transforming Love

We’re going to wonder at His transforming love, when we see all of us and all of the saints of the ages in a moment made like the Lord Jesus Christ. Some who’ve been stubborn and God-haters were conquered by His sovereign love. We’re going to see some who were ignorant and blind, who had their eyes opened to the glorious gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We’re going to see some who were demonized by sex, and drugs, and liquor, who’ve been made pure. We’re going to see all of the saints of God rise in glorified bodies like His glorified body. Is He Prophet, Priest, and King? We will be prophet, priest, and king. Is He perfect? We will be perfect. How we will wonder when we will see the Lord Jesus Christ! Not one vestige of sin will be left in me. I can hardly wait for the day when I am made in the likeness of my blessed Lord.

2. His Saving Grace

But, not only am I going to wonder at His transforming love; friend, I am going to wonder

at His saving grace. Look again in verse 10: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints”—we’ll all be saints—“and to be admired in all them that believe”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). What enables us to be caught up in the Rapture like this? What enables us to be transformed like this? Not the good that we have done, but because we have believed on Him. The Bible says it clearly, plainly, sweetly, sublimely: *“Believe”—believe, believe—“on the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 16:31). His transforming love—that will cause us to admire Him. His saving grace—that will cause us to admire the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. His Keeping Power

And then, His keeping power. Look again in verse 10: the Bible says, *“In all them that believe”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Now, think about that—*all*. Not one will be lost. Not a little child will be lost. Not a mighty man will be lost. When the Lord Jesus Christ saves us, friend, He keeps us. It is the glory of our Shepherd that not one of His sheep is lost. Jesus said, *“My Father gave them me—My Father, which is greater than all; no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand”* (John 10:29). And so, friend, what a wonderful, wonderful time this will be, when the Lord Jesus comes again!

D. The Witness of His Coming

And then, think not only of the wonder of His coming, but think of the witness of His coming. Look again, if you will, in verse 10—he says this: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe”—now, watch this—“(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Paul was witnessing of His coming. Paul was telling people, *“Look, the One who came is coming again.”* And, they believed it. And now, they’re caught up to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the air. The witness of His coming—Paul was constantly witnessing the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was the keynote (along with the cross) of the apostles’ preaching that the One who came is coming again. And, Paul said, *“Our testimony was believed among you”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Do you believe it? I hope you believe it, because if you believe it, you’re going to be telling others about it.

Now listen, folks, I’m going to be preaching on prophecy for four weeks, but the mark as to whether or not you believe what I preach is not whether you get it in your notebooks, but whether you get it in your heart, and in your feet, and in your mouth, and you become a soul winner. The Apostle Paul said, *“Our testimony among you was believed”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). And, that’s the reason you’re going to be, in this crowd, made like the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know what will be joy for me when I get to Heaven? To see people that I’ve had the joy of introducing to Jesus Christ. I don’t wanna go to Heaven without taking some souls with me.

'Must I go, and empty-handed?'
Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty-handed go? (Charles C. Luther).

Now, you take an individual. Maybe you sit by them on a bus. Maybe you see them on a ball field. Maybe they are with you in school. Maybe they're a clerk that works alongside of you in the office. And, you look at that individual, and they seem plain, common, ordinary, insignificant. But friend, wait 'till Jesus comes. Wait 'till you see that person that you've led to Christ transformed into His likeness. Wait 'till you see that person sparkling like a jewel in the crown of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, you'll say, "It was worth it all to win a soul to the Lord Jesus Christ."

And so, what is Paul talking about when he says, "Just rest. Rest with us"? He talks about the *who* of His coming, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed. He talks about the *when* of His coming, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed. He talks about the wonder of His coming. He's coming to be admired in all them that believe. And then, he talks about the witness of His coming. He says, "(...*our testimony among you was believed*) *in that day*" (2 Thessalonians 1:10). So, he's just saying, "Hey, folks, if you're saved, don't get blown out of the water by reading the newspapers and talking about all of the things that are happening on the earth." And, rather than saying, "What's the world coming to?" you need to start saying, "Look who's coming to the world. His name is Jesus."

II. You Should Not Be Deceived

Now, here's something else that the Apostle Paul tells, and I said there were three tremendous truths in this passage. Number one: You need not be disturbed. Number two: You should not be deceived—you should not be deceived.

Now, go on to chapter 2, and look, if you will, in verse 1: "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 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. Let no man deceive you by any means*" (2 Thessalonians 2:1–3). Now, what had happened in this church was there was a devilish deception. Somebody had written a forged letter, a bogus letter, had signed the Apostle Paul's name to it, and had said, in effect, that the Rapture had already taken place, that they were now in the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord means the Tribulation, that the day of the Lord is at hand. And, these saints who were suffering thought, "Oh, we have missed the Rapture. Jesus has come, and we're not a part of it!" And, they were shaken; they were troubled. And, the Apostle Paul takes the occasion of this devilish lie to tell the truth. He says, "Now, don't be deceived. Let no

man deceive you.” There are a lot of quacks. There a lot of charlatans. There a lot of self-styled cult leaders who are deceiving so many in this day and in this age, and that’s the reason we’re having to study on Bible prophecy. You need not be disturbed. He says, “Rest with us. Don’t be troubled. Don’t be shaken.” And, he says, “You must not—you should not—be deceived.”

And then, he begins to tell us what will happen, so we can know what will happen, and he then tells us what to look for. He says in verse 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; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3–5). Now, what he begins to talk about, now, is the coming antichrist. He’s called “the beast.” He’s called “the man of sin.” He’s called “the wicked one.” He is called here “the son of perdition” (that means judgment is coming for him). And, the Apostle Paul says that in order for us to have the day of the Lord, there has to come, first of all, a falling away, an apostasy. And then, he says there must come the antichrist, this beast, this man of sin.

Now, he’s called here “the man of sin.” Look at it, if you will, in verse 3: *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Now, there’s a man who is going to be so sinful that the Bible calls him “the man of sin,” and we see how far the human race has come. It began with the sin of man; it ends up with the man of sin. This man will be the epitome of evil. I looked up this phrase “man of sin” in different Bible translations. Some give it as “the man of lawlessness.” Others give it as “the incarnation of wickedness.” Others give it as “the champion of wickedness.” Others give it as “wickedness in human form.” There is coming upon this earth a creature, a man, who will be the devil wearing human clothes. He is called in Revelation chapter 13: “the beast.” And, next Sunday I’m going to be speaking on this subject: “The Nature of the Beast”—“The Nature of the Beast.” He is called, also, in the Bible, “the antichrist.” *Anti* means “against,” and it also means “instead of.” So, he is one who is coming against Christ, and he is coming as one who comes instead of Christ. He is a counterfeit Christ.

Now, Jesus said of His Father, when Jesus was here, on the Earth, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John 14:9). When the beast comes, the antichrist comes, the son of perdition—the man of sin—comes, he could equally say, “He who hath seen me hath seen my father,” because he will be the devil incarnate.

And, what is he going to do? Well, look, if you will, in verse 4: He *“opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”* (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Now, it's always been the devil's burning ambition to be worshiped. Satan said in Isaiah chapter 14: *"I will be like the most High"* (Isaiah 14:14). Satan wants to receive worship. We're going to see that, as we study, next week, on this message: "The Nature of the Beast." But, he opposes God, and he exalts himself above all that is called God.

And, the Bible says in this verse that he will do it in the temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4). That means that the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. And, there is a great move today to rebuild the temple on the temple mount in Jerusalem. You know that, if you read your newspaper today, that there is a great furor in the news today about Mount Moriah, where the temple was. And, both Jews and Arabs are laying claim to that particular spot. It is the international hotspot. As the Bible says, *"[In the last days] I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people"* (Zechariah 12:3). That's what Zechariah says, and we're seeing that fulfilled today.

Will the temple be rebuilt? Yes, it will be rebuilt. As a matter of fact, in rabbinical circles today, among ultra-orthodox Jews, they're talking about whether or not this is the time to rebuild the temple. Here's an Israeli news release. It says this—quote: "In the ministry of religion, a document concerning this was put forward"—*this* referring to the rebuilding of the temple—"in which proposals from all over the world were collected. Religious activists are for the erection of the temple as soon as possible. There is some opposition, but everything urges toward the building of the temple." When I've been in Jerusalem, I visited the old city. I'd gone into a particular treasury, a museum there, and seen the articles that are being prepared for temple worship there—remarkable works. They're working on robes for the priest to wear—exactly as they were described in the Old Testament. They're working on silver trumpets to blow. They're working on a laver, a washbasin, a harp to play, even a box to cast lots for the scapegoat. And, all of this is being done so that they can reinstitute temple worship.

Now, the Bible teaches that there's coming a time when there will be an apostasy, a falling away; and then, this man of sin, this beast, this antichrist, this beast of a man, is going to be revealed. Look, if you will, in verse 3: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The word *revealed* here literally means he's going to be "unveiled"; he's going to be "exposed"; he's going to be "uncovered." Now, if the Rapture's very near, that means that the antichrist is alive and well on Planet Earth, right now, if the Rapture is very close. The beast is here, waiting to be disclosed, because today he is disguised; today he is veiled. But, if the Rapture comes today, then tomorrow, or very soon, he will be unveiled.

Now, the Apostle Paul makes it very clear that there is, in our world today, already the spirit of antichrist. Look, if you will, in verse 6: and he says, *"And now ye know what withholdeth that he"*—the antichrist—*"might be revealed"*—or, "uncovered"—*"in his*

time”—and then, look for verse 7—“*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way*” (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7). For the word *let* there, write, in your Bible, the word *restrain*. He who restrains will restrain. To *let* is an old-fashioned word which means “to restrain.” So, what’s he saying in these verses? He is saying that there is a spirit in the world today called “*the mystery of iniquity*” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Wickedness was already working. It was at work in Paul’s time, and it has continued to work in the world today. All of the filth, all of the debauchery, is there. We’re up against spirit beings. We’re up against organized, brilliant, invisible, tireless demon spirits that the Bible calls “*the mystery of iniquity*” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). It is a devilish conspiracy. And yet, that conspiracy is going to come together in the last days under the antichrist.

Now, the Bible says, however, that this conspiracy is being held back; it is being restrained at this moment. Look, if you will, in verse 7: “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains will restrain], until he be taken out of the way*” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Who is the Restrainer? Who has Satan on a leash? You see, Satan is not able to do everything that he wants to do, or would do, could do, and will do, one day. There is someone who is restraining Satan, Satan’s superman, Satan’s counterfeit Christ. He cannot yet have his way. Who is this One who is doing the restraining? Well, He is the Holy Spirit. Now, the Holy Spirit has a ministry to help the saint, but He also has a ministry to hinder Satan. So, He is both helping the saint and hindering Satan at the same time.

Now, when Jesus comes, and the Rapture takes place, and we’re caught up to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the air, the Holy Spirit that lives in us is going to be taken out of the way. You see, the Church, right now, filled with the Holy Spirit, is the great boulder in Satan’s superhighway. The devil would love to see this church gone. The devil would love to have this kind of preaching no longer. The devil would love to see you, and your prayers, and the Holy Spirit in you taken out of the way, because you are an impediment. You are a hindrance, because... These verses speak of both a *who* and a *what*. The *who* is the Holy Spirit; the *what* is the Church. And, one of these days, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as we preached last Sunday, folks, we’re getting out of here. And, when we do—when we do—Hell will have a holiday. “He who restrains will restrain, until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). What is the Church? The Church is salt and light—salt and light! What does salt do? Salt purifies. Salt preserves. Salt decontaminates. It also stings and irritates. We are the salt of the earth; and when that salt is taken out, then the purification will begin. We are the light of the world. When that light is taken out, then darkness will engulf this globe. And, when the Holy Spirit, who indwells the Church, is taken away (in the sense that He indwells the Church), and He just simply stands aside, it is at that moment, friend, that Hell will have

a holiday.

You know, the people of this world don't like Bible-believing Christians anyway. They think that we are an impediment. They think we're odd. They think we're weird. They think we're stubborn. They think we're standing in the way of progress. So, one of these days, we'll be outta here. One of these days, we'll be gone. And then, the Restrainer will no longer be here; and, at that time, folks, you might as well try to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks as to hold back the flood of wickedness and evil that will come upon this world. That time is known, in the Bible, as the Great Tribulation.

Now tonight, I'm going to just give you a panorama of all prophecy and just try to put it in one, two, three, four, five, six, seven steps, that we'll get it all clear in our hearts and in our minds. But, just remember what the Apostle Paul is saying to the saints. He says, "You need not be disturbed. Rest with us. Rest with us. Jesus is coming." But, he says, "You must not be deceived! Don't let somebody write some bogus letter to you. Don't let some charlatan deceive you about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." "That day"—we're not in the Tribulation yet. The Tribulation takes place after the Rapture of the Church, when there's a falling away and the man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition, the antichrist.

Now folks, when you see what the antichrist can do and will do, you will bless God for the Restrainer. You better praise God for the Holy Spirit. This man—this man—will be the devil incarnate. His intellectual genius will be great. His authority will be overpowering. His hatreds will be extraordinary. His techniques will be superb. Men will be willing to die for the antichrist. Women will swooning and fainting at his feet. Little children will breathe his name with praise. He will come as a great world leader. He'll be a part of Satan's master plan, which is tied to Satan's master man. But, we're going to see, next Sunday, how Satan will turn this world into a vast concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered. Everybody must receive a number to buy or sell—no sign, no sell; no mark, no merchandise. We're going to talk about that next week. But, he will be evil wickedness distilled. He will be all of the Hitlers, the Napoleons, the Stalins, the Saddam Husseins, all melded into one man—so much that the Bible calls him "the man of sin." The computer will have all people who are here registered. As we've told you before, at that time, men will be regimented with no escape. *The more machines act like men, the more men will act like machines*—and they will do that during the Great Tribulation. There will be days of torture and terror, and people who do not receive the Lord Jesus Christ in this day and in this age will believe the lies of the antichrist. Look, if you will, in verses 11 and 12: *"And for this cause God"—"God"—"shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thessalonians 2:11–12). I wish we had more time to talk about that, but I wanna get to the third point.

III. You Will Not Be Disappointed

First point is this—listen to me—you should not be disturbed. Second point: You must not be deceived. He says, *“Let no man deceive you”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Third point: You will not be disappointed—you will not be disappointed.

Look, if you will, in verse 8: he says, *“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Right there is the Battle of Armageddon. That’s the Battle of Armageddon. We’ll talk more about the Battle of Armageddon tonight, when, *“And then shall that Wicked be revealed”*—literally, “Wicked One.” Notice, in my Bible, the *Wicked* is capitalized. It refers to a person. And, it has the masculine singular ending—*“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”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). What does it mean—*“consume with the spirit of his mouth?”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Do you know how the Battle of Armageddon is going to be fought? It’s going to be fought with a word that comes out of Jesus’s mouth. Do you know what that word’s gonna be? “Drop dead.” He’s going to consume him. He’s going to consume him with the spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His coming.

Now, what I’ve tried to tell you today is you need not be disturbed; you should not be deceived; you will not be disappointed. I am telling you, with all of the unction, function, and emotion of my soul, that Jesus Christ is coming again.

A. Two Aspects of the Second Coming of Christ

Now, learn this: there are two aspects of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we talk about the *coming* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the word, literally, is His *appearing*. And, it is not talking, so much, about a particular period of time, as it is a series of events that take place when our Lord comes again.

1. He Is Coming for His Bride (Sweetly)

First of all, He’s coming for His bride, and that coming is going to be sweet and secret. Second Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 1—go back and look at it again: *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him”* (2 Thessalonians 2:1).

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found (Edward Mote).*

“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven...with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up...to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

2. He Is Coming with His Bride (Sovereignly)

Now, He is coming for His bride; and then, secondly, He is coming with His bride. He

comes, first of all, at the Rapture to take us out; then, after the Tribulation, He is coming back to this earth to rule and to reign with His bride. Now, verse 8 speaks of His coming, this time, with His bride. He is coming back now in glory and power. He's coming, first of all, sweetly, as a bridegroom. Then, He's coming back sovereignly, as a king, and thank God for that.

Now, what is going to happen is this: that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to destroy antichrist. He is coming in all of His majesty. The antichrist, as we're going to see next Sunday, has a number that he will give to all. It is the number 666. We're going to talk about that. But, this verse that we're looking at, right now, tells us that 777's gonna take care of 666, folks. That's what he's saying right here. He's saying here that, *"And then shall that Wicked"—666—"be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth"*—that is, 777 (2 Thessalonians 2:8). You see, when Jesus came the first time, He suffered in shame. When He comes again, He is coming to reign in glory. When Jesus came the first time, they crowned Him with thorns. When He comes again, He will wear a crown of glory. When He came the first time, He came to die in the sinner's place. When He comes the second time, He is coming to execute judgment on the unsaved sinner. Jesus is both Savior and Judge. He says, *"The Father judgeth no man, but he hath committed all judgment unto the Son"* (John 5:22). The first time He came, He came *"to seek and to save that which [is] lost"* (Luke 19:10). When He comes again, according to our scripture, in the first chapter, He's coming *"in flaming fire, to take vengeance on those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). When He came the first time, He came in the greatest of humility—as we preached last Wednesday night—riding on a donkey in humility. When He comes again, He is coming in power and glory. When He came the first time, He was rejected of men. When He comes the second time, every knee shall bow—even the knee of every unbeliever will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Conclusion

Now, what has our scripture told us today? Three things: We need not be disturbed. Now friend, if I did not know the Bible, if I did not know the Bible, if I did not know Bible prophecy, if I did not understand who Jesus is and what God has planned for us, I wanna tell you something: I would be a world-class pessimist. This world is like a Shakespearean tragedy. When you read a Shakespearean tragedy, you know it's coming to an untimely end, and there's nothing that can stop it—apart from Jesus. That's the way our world is: without the Lord Jesus Christ, I would be an industrial-strength pessimist, but you're looking at a glowing optimist. We need not be disturbed! We must not be deceived, because, friend, we will not be disappointed. You can bank

on it—that Jesus Christ, who came the first time, is coming again. *“This same Jesus”—*that angel said—*“which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11).

Now, what does this mean to all of us? Friend, it means in these glorious days in which we’re living, in the beginning of the end, we need to be moving up one step higher. These are not days to let up, or back up, or shut up, until we’re taken up. What we need to do is to press the battle right to the gates. I want to go up as a growing Christian. I want to be a better Christian tomorrow than I am today. I wanna love Jesus more this afternoon than I do this morning. I want to be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And, the great Apostle Paul—the great Apostle Paul—at the end of his life, said, “I’m reaching for the prize of the high calling of God” (Philippians 3:14). At the end of his life, he’s still climbing. He’s still going up.

A. The Intercession Factor

What does that mean? Folks, it means there is the intercession factor. If Jesus Christ is coming, we ought to be praying for unsaved loved ones that don’t know Jesus. We ought to be getting as many ready for the Rapture as we can by winning souls to Jesus Christ.

B. The Soul-Winning Factor

But, not only is there the intercession factor; let me tell you what else there is, friend: there’s the soul-winning factor. Be telling people about Jesus.

*Friends all around me are trying to find
What the heart yearns for, by sin undermined;
I have the secret, I know where ’tis found:
Only true pleasures in Jesus abound (Harold Loes).*

We need to be winning souls.

C. The Preparation Factor

I’ll tell you what else there is: there’s the preparation factor. You need to be getting into your children Bible truth. This world is becoming so vile, so wicked, so fast. You need to—you need to—teach your children. You need to build Bible truth into your children. You need to get these messages on prophecy into your heart and then into their hearts. Prepare them for what is coming on the earth. I feel sorry for those who do not understand, who do not have a solid rock to stand on, in these dangerous days in which we’re living.

D. The Comfort Factor

And, last of all, friend, there is the comfort factor. Thank God—thank God—we can say, “Lord Jesus, even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Now, if that bothers you that Jesus is coming and we're going, you know what it tells me? You just love this world, and you don't love Jesus. But friend, if you love the Lord Jesus, you can hardly wait. What a day that will be when He shall come with trumpet sound, and together we'll be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord! And, I wanna say with the psalmist, "I'll be satisfied when I awaken in His likeness" (Psalm 17:15). Won't you?

Bow your heads in prayer. Father God, I pray—I pray, Lord—that in the light of Your coming, that we will be moving up one step higher, for we pray in Jesus's holy name. Amen.

The Beginning of the End

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: April 06, 1997

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10 2:1–10

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Introduction

Be finding, please, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 in your Bibles. In a moment, we're going to begin reading in verse 7, but while you're finding that, let me say that the stage is set and the curtain is about to be drawn back on the drama of the ages. Things are getting ready to unfold, and we are living, I believe, in the beginning of the end, and we dare not be ignorant.

There are three tremendous truths in the scriptures that we have for us today, and let's begin now in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 7: *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When He shall come"*—I love that phrase—*"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–10).

I. You Need Not Be Disturbed

Now, these verses deal with the first of these three tremendous truths, and here's the first of these tremendous truths in the life of the soon-coming Lord. Are you ready? Truth number one: You need not be disturbed—you need not be disturbed.

Now, if you're troubled with all of the things that are happening in the world today, look in verse 7: *"And to you who are troubled rest with us"—"rest with us"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Friend, nothing has gotten out of control. You don't have to go around with headline hysteria. Hey, it's exactly, precisely as God said it would be. And, all of history is fitting into the sockets of prophecy. You know, there are three categories of people in the world today: there are those who are afraid; there are those who don't know enough to be afraid, and there are those who know their Bibles, amen? *"You who are troubled rest with us"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). You need not be disturbed. Why? Because our Lord is on His way. Look, if you will, in verse 7: *"And to you who are troubled rest with us"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

A. The Who of His Coming: Jesus

Now, who is coming? Who is coming? *"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). That's why I like that song, "He's Still Lord of All." He was Lord then; He will be Lord when He comes again. And, actually, when this verse says, *"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7), what it literally means is "when He's going to be unveiled." The word *revelation*, here, is the same word *apocalypse*. "When there's coming an apocalypse"—that means "an unveiling." You see, today, His glory, His majesty, is veiled; and today, He is hated, and despised, and ridiculed, and cursed, and made the butt of jokes. People will see Him one day as who He is. Amen? The Lord Jesus—the One who was kicked, and cursed, and spat upon, and beaten, and ridiculed, and lied to, and misjudged—He is coming, and He will still be Lord of lords. His glory will be revealed. That's who is coming.

Now, some people try to explain away the Second Coming of Jesus. They say, "Well, the Second Coming of Jesus is some event in history." I know a false cult that teaches that. Other people teach that the Second Coming of Jesus is when the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. Thank God He did, but that's not the Second Coming of Jesus. Some teach that the Second Coming of Jesus is when we die; then, we go to Heaven, and they call that "the Second Coming of Jesus." But, the Bible says, "The Lord Himself—the Lord Jesus—shall be revealed...in flaming fire" (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8). Acts chapter 1, verse 11: that angel said, *"This same Jesus"—"this same Jesus"—"which is taken up from you...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the same Jesus who came the first time, is coming literally, actually, visibly, bodily back to this

earth—this same Jesus. That's the *who* of His coming.

B. The *When* of His Coming: On Time

And, look at verse 7, again, at the *when* of His coming: “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed*”—not *if*, *when* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). It's certain. As a matter of fact, Malachi, the last Old Testament book, says that Jesus's coming is like the sunrise to those who fear His name. The Bible says, “[*Then*] *shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*” (Malachi 4:2). I like the fact that His coming is like the sunrise, because I'll tell you two things about the sunrise: you can't hurry it up, and you can't stop it. Amen? He's coming. The sunrise comes on time; and Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness, and He is coming. He came the first time on time. The Bible says, “*When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son*” (Galatians 4:4). Isn't that right? In the fullness of time. And, He's coming the second time in the fullness of time. He'll not be one millisecond ahead of time; He'll not be one millisecond late. Everything is on schedule.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found (Edward Mote).

I have an idea that His coming is very, very near. But, it speaks of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One of these days—one of these days—the Lord Jesus is going to step from Heaven, pull back the shades of darkness, pin them with a star, open the door of the morning, and flood the world with the sunshine of His Second Coming. Some golden daybreak, Jesus will come. Jesus is going to come.

C. The Wonder of His Coming

Now, we think... Look in verse 7. The *who* of His coming: the Lord Jesus. The *when* of His coming: when He shall come. And then, the wonder of His coming. Look, if you will, in verse 10 of this same chapter—I love this: “*When He shall come to be glorified in his saints*”—now, watch this—“*and to be admired*”—“*to be admired*”—“*in all them that believe*” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). I love that. You know, this word *admired*—it literally means “to be wondered at.” We will be dazzled when we see Him. You think you understand what it's going to be like? Friend, you don't have one scintilla of an iota of an idea what it will be like when Jesus comes. Oh, how we will admire the Lord Jesus Christ! And, what will we admire the Lord Jesus Christ for?

1. His Transforming Love

Well, when He comes, we're going to be made like Him, and we will admire Him. We will wonder at His transforming love. You think of those of us who were stubborn and unbelieving who were reached by His grace. Think of those who were demonized by drugs, and alcohol, and pride, and lust. Think of those, dear friend, who were ignorant, and blind, and stumbling in darkness; and now, we're made like the Lord Jesus. Is He

perfect? So will we be. Is He Prophet, Priest, and King? So will we be. We will be like the Lord Jesus. And, as we look at what He has done for us, at that redeemed multitude, how we will admire the Lord Jesus, and how we will wonder at the Lord Jesus!

2. His Amazing Grace

We'll wonder not only at His transforming love, oh, but we will wonder at His amazing grace, because the Bible says in verse 10, He's coming—look at it: *"to be admired in all them that believe"* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). "Well, Adrian, you mean you don't get in the Rapture by doing good works, or by being baptized, or by giving your money?" No, just by believing in Jesus—just by believing in Jesus. That, friend, is amazing grace. The Bible says it clearly, plainly, sweetly, surely, sublimely: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:31). Who is going to admire the Lord Jesus when He comes again? Who's going to be transformed? *"Them that believe"* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). We will admire Him for His transforming love. We will admire Him for His saving grace.

3. His Keeping Power

I'll tell you what else we'll admire Him for: for His keeping power. Look at that verse—verse 10—again: it says, *"All them that believe"* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Not one of them will be lost—not one of them will be lost. Every one.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes:
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never—no, never, no, never forsake
—Fernando Ortega

Everybody who puts his faith in Jesus is going to be in the Rapture. Thank God for that. No wonder we will admire Him for His transforming love, for His amazing grace, for His steadfast power.

D. The Witness of His Coming

You see, this verse speaks of the *who* of His coming, the *when* of His coming, the wonder of His coming; and then, it speaks of the witness of His coming. Look again in verse 10: *"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe"*—why? Look at it. Why?—*"(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day"* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). There was somebody who'd been witnessing about His coming; there's somebody who'd been giving a testimony about Jesus coming again. Friend, when Jesus comes, don't you want to be like the Apostle Paul and have some people who are going to be in that crowd going up? Paul says, "You're going to be there"—why? Why did you believe?—"because you believed our

testimony. We preached the gospel to you, we told you about Jesus.” Now folks, I’m looking forward to Jesus coming, but I don’t want to go by myself. I want to take a crowd with me. Don’t you? The Apostle Paul took a crowd with him. He said, “My testimony was believed among you” (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

Let me tell you something, folks: when you see somebody that you’ve won to Jesus Christ with Jesus Christ in the Rapture, how you’ll bless God that you were a soul winner! You know, you see a little guy, a little dirty-faced boy. He may be insignificant to you. Or, maybe you sit by a little lady on a bus; maybe she’s faded, and bedraggled, and old, poor, insignificant. Or, maybe you see a laborer over here, breaking his back in the hot sun, digging a ditch, uneducated, perhaps, living from hand to mouth. You say, “Well, you know, that’s not one of the high and mighty.” Let me tell you something, folks: bring them to Jesus, and wait until you see them shining as jewel in His crown. Wait ’till you see what His redeeming love and grace...see them sitting with the saints of all of the ages, when Jesus comes, and they’re transformed and made into His likeness.

And, if you believe what I’m preaching about Jesus’s coming again, as I said last Sunday, you’re going to get your head out of the clouds of prophecy and on the pavement of soul-winning, bringing souls to Jesus. The real proof that you believe what I’m preaching is not do you get it in your notebook, but do you get it in your heart? And, what are you doing to warn men to flee from the wrath to come? Now, what he is saying is, “Look, you who are troubled, rest with us. Jesus is coming. You need not be disturbed. Okay? Don’t let Satan blow you away with all of his boisterous talk, and all of his accusations, and all of this.” Friend, we are on the winning side.

II. You Should Not Be Deceived

Now, here’s the second thing I want you to see. I’ve said there are three tremendous truths. Truth number one: Jesus is coming—Jesus is coming. You need not be disturbed. “*And to you who are troubled rest with us*” (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Jesus is coming. Here’s the second truth; get ready for it: Jesus is coming; you should not be deceived.

Now, continue to read. Look in chapter 2: “*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him*”—that’s the Rapture—“*That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled*”—that is, “You need not be disturbed”—“*neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means*” (2 Thessalonians 2:1–3). You need not be disturbed. You should not be deceived.

Now, as we get closer to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, there’s going to be a lot of quacks, and fakes, and charlatans, and false cults, and all kinds of things are taught, and many of them will be taught as coming from God. As a matter of fact, a

devilish deception had taken place there in Thessalonica. Somebody had written a forged letter and signed the Apostle Paul's name to it. That's what he says. He says, "Don't be deceived as though some letter had come from us": *"by word, nor letter as from us"* (2 Thessalonians 2:2). Paul says, "I didn't write that letter. It's a forgery." Somebody had written a letter, and you know what the letter said? The letter said, "The day of the Lord is at hand." What that meant is, "We're in the Great Tribulation. The Rapture has taken place, and you have missed it." And, they were all troubled. They were all shaken. They were all distorted. They were all deceived—many of them were. And, Paul said, "You need not be disturbed, and don't be deceived. I didn't write that letter."

Now folks, in the last days, many false prophets are going to come. You understand that, don't you? And, they're going to be speaking lies and hypocrisy. That's all the more reason we need to open the book and read it. We need to understand what God says—black print on white paper, interpreted by the Holy Spirit into our hearts—so we can be ready for the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes.

Now, Paul begins to explain, therefore, what will happen in the days that are going to follow, and I want you to follow along with him under the heading, now, "We Need Not Be Deceived." What he is saying is that there is coming a time after the Rapture when Satan will fling his one final insult into the face of God, and the agent of this blasphemy will be the antichrist. This antichrist, as we're going to see in the passage we're going to read in just a moment, is called "the man of sin"—"the man of sin." Our trouble began with the sin of man; it will climax with the man of sin. This man will be the quintessence, the epitome, the distillation of all evil. Evil will be in this man so much that he is called "the man of sin." He will be the devil's messiah. He will be to the devil as Jesus is to God the Father. When the Lord Jesus was here on earth, the Lord Jesus said, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*" (John 14:9). This man of sin will be able to say, "He who hath seen me hath seen my father," but his father is Satan himself. He is the son of perdition. He is called "the man of sin."

Let's read about it here in this scripture—verse 3: "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first*"—the words "falling away" are a translation of the Greek word *apostasy*. There will come an apostasy—"and that man of sin"—not a man of sin; *that* man of sin, a specified person—"that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The word *perdition* means "judgment." He is headed for judgment. I looked up this phrase "man of sin" in different translations. One gives it "the man of lawlessness." Another gives it as "the incarnation of wickedness." Another gives it "the champion of wickedness." Another translation: "wickedness in human form." This is the man of sin. Again, the Bible calls him "the beast." In Revelation chapter 13, he is called "the beast."

Next Sunday, if you'll come, I'm going to be speaking on this subject: "The Nature of the Beast"—"The Nature of the Beast." And, we're going to be talking about the mark of the beast, and all of these things that will happen (out of the Book of the Revelation).

But now, he's called, in this chapter—the Apostle Paul calls him—"*the man of sin*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The Apostle John calls him "the beast," and he calls him "the antichrist." Now, the prefix *anti* means two things at the same time: *anti* means "against," but it also means "instead of." And so, who is this man? Here is this man who's coming, who is against Christ. But, how is he against Christ? He is against Christ by coming instead of Christ. He is the devil's messiah; he is the counterfeit Christ. Jesus said, "I've come in My Father's name, and you didn't receive Me. But," He said, "if another will come in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5:43). And, this antichrist is coming; this beast of a man is coming, and he's going to be revealed. Notice in verse 3 it says he's going to be revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3). That means he's going to be unveiled, just like the Lord Jesus, in His time, is going to be unveiled. The antichrist is going to be revealed, and he's going to be unveiled. That means if the Rapture were to come today that the antichrist would be alive on the earth today, waiting to be revealed, waiting to have his disguise ripped away. He comes as he is. He may be alive and well and on Planet Earth today.

And, while we are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, there's something very ugly working in our world, and that thing that is working in our world is called "the mystery of iniquity." Look, if you will, in verse 6: "*And ye know what withholdeth*"—underscore the word *what*—"And ye know what withholdeth that he"—the antichrist, the beast, the son of perdition—"might be revealed in his time"—underscore "in his time"—"*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way*" (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7). Underscore *he* and the word *let*. If you're using *The King James*, just write in here "restrains." Now, what's he saying? He's saying that there's something evil, vile, a conspiracy against the sons and daughters of men; it is called "the mystery of iniquity." There's an evil, dark, demonic, devilish force that is working in the world today. And, as you read the newspapers, as you see the entertainment, as you listen to the philosophies of this world, there is an ungodly force. The Bible calls it "the mystery of iniquity," and it was working in Paul's day. And, he says, "*[It] doth already work*" (2 Thessalonians 2:7). But, he says, "There's something that is holding it back. There's something that restrains," he says. And, you know what restrains? "And He who lets"—or, "restrains"—"will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Now, the Holy Spirit has a ministry to help the saint, but He also has a ministry to hinder Satan. So, He's both helping the saint and hindering Satan at the same time. Now, Satan can go only so far. We read in the Book of Job that Satan has a leash on

him. He can only go so far, and God will not let him go any further, because there is a restraining force that is holding him back—something that the Bible calls “the mystery of iniquity”—and there is a restraint. Satan is on a leash, but when the Church is taken out, then all Hell will break loose. Hell will have a holiday.

Now, notice I said, “Underscore the phrase *what*, and underscore the phrase *he*.” What is taken out? What stands aside? The Church (at the Rapture). He started out this passage... He said, “I’m gathering together unto Him. We are going to be gathered unto the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to be taken out of this earth” (2 Thessalonians 2:1). That is the *what*: the Church. And, the *He* is the Holy Spirit who indwells the Church. The *what*—the Church; the *He*—the Holy Spirit. Now, the Holy Spirit has a twofold ministry: one, to help the saints; number two, to hinder Satan. But, the Helper, who’s in us, and the Hinderer, who, through us, is holding back the power of Satan, will one day be taken out of this world.

Now, let me tell you something about Bible-believing Christians who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ: we’re looked down upon; we’re minimized; we’re spit upon; we’re scorned; *we’re called “fundamentalists”—too much fun, too much damn, and not enough mental*. They love to mock at us, and so forth. Well, one of these days, we’ll be gone; they won’t have to bother with us. I mean, right now, we are a boulder in Satan’s superhighway, but we’ll be gone. The restraint will be taken out of the way; the leash will be taken off of Satan.

Do you know what the Church is? The Church is salt and light. Now, what does salt do? Salt cleanses. Salt decontaminates. Salt preserves. When the salt of this earth is taken out of this earth, you will see rottenness, and decay, and filth, and stench like you have never seen before, because all restraint will be gone. And, when the light is taken out, then unmitigated, sturgeon darkness will come. And, rather than light and truth, you will have darkness and error that will encircle the globe. When we’re gathered together to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, the restraint will be taken away from the mystery of iniquity. And, when the restraint is taken away from the mystery of iniquity, you might as well try to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks as to stop the flood tide of lawlessness, as this man of sin, this wicked one, will come to rule here, upon the earth.

I’m going to be speaking about this man next week, but let me tell you something, friend: he will be an intellectual genius. He will have overpowering authority. His hatreds will be extraordinary, but his techniques will be superb. And, Satan’s master plan is tied up with Satan’s master man. He will be all the Hitlers, the Alexander the Greats, the Napoleons, the Stalins, the Saddam Husseins all rolled into one—Satan’s superman. He will come with a rule of reward and torture, and he will turn this world into a vast concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered.

Now, what is Paul telling this church? “Jesus is coming; you need not be disturbed.

But, Jesus is coming; you must not be deceived, because he's going to deceive those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ." Look in verses 9 and 10: *"Even him"—the wicked one—"whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders"—you say, "Well, if I'm not saved, I won't believe the antichrist."* Yes, you will—yes, you will. He'll make you think that up is down, good is bad, light is dark. He'll make you betray your own mother. Men would die for him. Women will swoon at his feet. Little children will speak his name with reverence. He's coming—*"with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"* (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10). What am I saying, folks? Listen—listen to your pastor: Jesus is coming; you need not be disturbed. Jesus is coming; you should not be deceived. Okay?

III. You Will Not Be Disappointed

Here's the third thing. Are you ready? Okay, Jesus is coming; you will not be disappointed—you will not be disappointed. Look, if you will, in verse 8: *"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Now, the Lord Jesus Christ is going to destroy this antichrist. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to consume him with the spirit of His mouth—that is, with His Word. This speaks of the Battle of Armageddon, and we're going to talk about that tonight: when Heaven is opened, and the saints come, this time, with the Lord Jesus Christ. And, the Bible says, "Out of Jesus's mouth will go a sharp two-edged sword; and with it, He'll smite the nations" (Revelation 19:15). With the spirit of His mouth—with His Word—the battle will be won. Here comes antichrist with all of his militia, with all of his forces, at the Battle of Armageddon, finally coming against God's ancient people, the Jews, to destroy and decimate Jerusalem and to take over. And then, "then shall that Wicked be consumed by the spirit of His mouth" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The Lord Jesus will say, "Drop dead." The battle will be over. *"With the spirit of his mouth"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8)—this speaks of His coming in glory.

You see, the Second Coming of Jesus is in two phases: first of all, He comes secretly for the Church—that's the Rapture; then, He comes sovereignly to rule and to reign—that's the Revelation. First, He comes so as to take away His bride, as the Bridegroom. Then, He comes back with His bride as King of kings and Lord of lords to rule and to reign forever. And, this verse speaks of that day when Jesus shall come. The first time He came as the lowly Nazarene. When He comes again, He's coming as King of kings and Lord of lords. When He came the first time, He stood before Pilate. When He comes again, Pilate will stand before Him. When He came the first time, they nailed Him to a tree^F when He comes again, He will sit upon the throne, and *"the earth*

shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as...waters [that] cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14). And, the saints of God can hardly wait for Jesus to come again. And, if you're not excited about Jesus Christ coming again, if your heart does not say, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Revelation 22:20), I believe that you're too much in love with this world and not enough in love with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

I hear thundering hoof beats. The horses of the Great Tribulation are on the horizon. Perilous days are coming, but folks, we're waiting on Jesus—we're waiting on Jesus. We aren't looking for any signs; we're listening for a shout. Many of us may not die. We're not looking for the undertaker; we're looking for the Upper-taker. I mean, He'll come in a moment. You say, "Well, Pastor, I don't think He's coming today." Oh, you don't? Well, the Bible says, *"In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"* (Matthew 24:44). He's coming as a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Has a thief ever written you a letter saying, "I'm coming tonight"? No, friend. Suddenly, surely, swiftly the trumpet will sound, *"and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up...to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Jesus is coming; don't be disturbed. Jesus is coming; don't be deceived. Jesus is coming; you will not be disappointed. If you put your faith in Him, you'll be in that crowd that admires the Lord Jesus.

Now, what does that mean to us? It means we need to be moving up one step higher.

1. The Intercession Factor

There's the intercession factor. We need to be praying, interceding, for our world and for the lost.

2. The Soul-Winning Factor

There's the soul-winning factor. We need to be getting our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, neighbors and associates into the ark of safety before the floods of the Tribulation break upon this world.

3. The Instruction Factor

Tell you what else there is: there's the instruction factor. Did you know that we need to be getting our children ready and giving them an understanding of what is coming to this world? Many of them are stumbling in darkness. They don't know! We have the Word of God. The Bible says, "We are not in darkness, that that day should overtake us as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

4. The Comfort Factor

And, last of all, there is the comfort factor. Don't be soon shaken, troubled. "*Rest with us*" (2 Thessalonians 1:7). "He cannot fail, He must prevail." What a mighty God we serve!

Bow your heads in prayer. Now, Lord Jesus, help us to grow in Your grace and in Your knowledge. And, help us to be moving up one step higher until we hear Your voice say, "Come up higher," and we're raptured to meet You in the air.

Now, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you've never given your heart to Jesus Christ, if you have never trusted Him as your personal Lord and Savior, I want you to do so right now. I want you to pray and say, "Lord Jesus—Lord Jesus—I need You. I want You. Come into my heart right now, and save me. And, help me, Lord Jesus, to have the courage to make it public. Don't let me be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray."

The Unfinished Story of Christmas

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: December 24, 2000

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:7–119 2:1–14

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Introduction

Would you take God's precious, inspired, inerrant, wonderful Word and turn to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1—2 Thessalonians chapter 1? We're talking today about the unfinished Christmas story, or, as Paul Harvey would say, "the rest of the story." Now, you see, the Jesus who came the first time is coming again, and Christmas is not complete without the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The incarnation without the coronation would be like east without west. It would be like an engagement without a marriage. The story is not complete until Jesus comes again.

We all know the old story about the man who was in a hotel room late at night, very weary, going to bed—took off one of his shoes and dropped it on the floor with a thud. And then, he thought, "That's so thoughtless of me. There's somebody beneath me. I shouldn't have dropped that shoe like that." So, he took the other shoe off and quietly put it on the floor. In about an hour and a half, somebody knocked at his door. It was the man in the room beneath him. He said, "Would you please drop the other shoe?" We're waiting for the dropping of the other shoe. Now, I love Christmas. Hey, the best is yet to be—not only the incarnation, but the coronation!

I was raised during the time they called “the Great Depression,” and we didn’t have a lot of the toys that kids have today. As a matter of fact, we had very few things. And, when we played ball, we played ball with a bat that had been broken and wrapped up with electric tape—“friction tape,” we called it. We had a ball that had tape around it. And, by the way, if the guy who owned the ball went home, the game was over—that was it. I mean, we didn’t have a Nintendo, or Game Boy, or Play Station, or something. We didn’t have that. And, there were three of us. We had one bicycle. Where it came from I don’t know. Somebody gave it to our family. It was a big bicycle. Now, a normal size bicycle is 26 inches; this one was 28 inches. It was black, had no fenders on it, but it was sturdy. And, all of us...my sister—it wasn’t a girl’s bike, but she had to ride that bike—an older sister. I have an older brother, and I was the youngest of the three. We rode that old black bicycle, big thing. I learned how to ride not by sitting on the seat—because I couldn’t reach the pedals if I did that—I learned how to ride by putting my leg underneath the bar, and holding the bicycle out that way, and riding with the bicycle... Really, I rode the bicycle that way with... I couldn’t straddle that bar that went across on a boy’s bicycle, so that’s the way I rode my bike, when I got a chance to ride it—a big, old black bicycle like that.

And, I can remember Christmas. We had a Christmas, and I thought it was a pretty good Christmas, but very frankly, I thought my brother and sister got just a tad more than I did. But, it was Christmas, and, you know, you’re not supposed to complain and so forth. And so, I just was happy. And, “Adrian, do you like your presents?” “Yes ma’am; yes, Daddy. Thank you very much.” But then, they said, “We’re going over to see Uncle Rufus on Christmas Day.” “Well, I... Fine.” So, we went over to see Uncle Rufus, and after we visited for a while, they said, “Adrian, go out and look on the front porch.” And, I went out and looked on the front porch, and there was a 24-inch, brand new, candy apple red, Schwinn bicycle that was mine. Wow! I mean, I could not believe it. You know, I thought it was a good Christmas. But friend, I want to tell you, the best is yet to come—not only that Christmas so long ago, but this Christmas today. Now friend, thank God for what we have, but I tell you, the Heavenly Father has so much more when Jesus comes again. The Christ of Christmas is coming again.

I want you to take your Bibles, and look, if you will, here, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, and let’s begin in verse 7. Now, Paul was talking to some people who were living in chaotic times, and he says this: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was*

believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7–11). What wonderful, wonderful scripture! You see, we get all wrapped up in the little baby, the baby that was born. And, we then go even beyond the birth of the baby, and we say, "Yes, He came to die for our sins." Thank God He did that. But, I want to remind you now of the Christmas message.

And, see how the first coming of Jesus and the Second Coming are linked together. Put in your margin there, by 1 Thessalonians, the first chapter, put this scripture down—the Christmas story—Luke 1. Listen to what the angel said in Luke 1 to Mary, concerning the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ—in Luke 1, verse 31, the angel said, "*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS*"—well, that literally happened, did it not? That's history. Say, "Amen." She conceived. She brought forth a son. She did call His name Jesus—"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest"—well, He was great, is great. He is the Son of the Highest. Now, watch this. Listen to the rest of the story—"and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31–33). It speaks not only of the Jesus who redeemed, but the Jesus who reigns—not only the Jesus who came the first time, but the Jesus who is coming again the second time to sit upon the throne of His father David and to rule over the house of Jacob (and that's the name for fleshly Jews) forever and ever. *The most glorious fact of the past is that Jesus came the first time. The most glorious fact of the future is that this Jesus is coming again.* And, I want to tell you, the one sure hope—the one sure hope—of this jittery old world is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine—without the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection, the Rapture, and all of that—can you imagine what it would be like? I preached a funeral a while back. A man in our church died—a dear man, a beloved man. I sat there. I saw all of those flowers. I saw the children. I saw the grandchildren. I went up and looked at the flowers. One said, "To Pop." Another said, "To Grandpa." I watched that sweet widow who lived with that man for so long, and they had both come up to a full ripe age. I watched her, and I stand there so many times at the open casket and fight back the tears. And, I watched her, and she went up. Now, these folks had lived together for over 50 years. I watched her as she just put her hands on that coat sleeve, and gave it a little tug, and then turned and walked away. And, I thought how terrible it must be to be an atheist. She wasn't; she was a true believer. What do atheists do in times like that? I mean, is this all it is? Are we just going to get sick, and die, and go into the ground, and that's it? No! Jesus is coming again. "The dead in Christ will rise first: And we which remain—our lives will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall

we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”* (Revelation 22:20). I’m telling you, His first coming without His Second Coming would be like an engagement without a wedding. No, He is coming again, and I thank God for that.

Now, there’s going to be a glorious contrast. That’s what Paul is talking about here. He is talking about the contrast. You see, the first time He came, He came to die in the sinner’s place. This scripture tells us that when He comes again, He’s coming to execute judgment upon those who refuse such love (Jude 1:15). When He came the first time, He came as a messenger of love. When He comes again, He is coming in vengeance as a righteous judge. When He came the first time, He came in the greatest of humility—Deity in diapers. When He comes again, He’s coming as King of kings and Lord of Lords. When He came the first time, He came as the lowly Nazarene. When He comes again, He’s coming as the One who will rule and reign over the universe. The first time He was despised and rejected of men. This scripture tells us He’s coming to be glorified and admired in all of them that believe (2 Thessalonians 1:10). No longer a crown of thorns—a diadem; not a cradle of straw, but a crown of glory.

Now, with that in mind, as we think about the rest of the story, may I lay three things upon your heart—three things that ought to give you Christmas cheer; three things that ought to help you in this weary, old world in which we live; three thoughts to carry with you from this service today?

I. You Need Not Be Disturbed

Number one: According to this scripture, you need not be disturbed. Look, if you will, in verse 7: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7)—that is, “Be at ease; quit your worry.” Are you troubled today? Listen, it is not over yet. There is an unfinished story. “If you’re troubled, rest with us” (2 Thessalonians 1:7). You say, “Pastor, it’s so dark.” Yes, it’s gloriously dark, because the darkest hour of the night is just before the sunrise. Our hope is not in politics. Our hope is not in sociology. Our hope is not in science. The only sure hope, I say, for this jittery old world is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Think about the *Who* of His Coming

Now, just look in verses... Well, let’s just look in these verses for a moment. Look in verse 7, and think about who is coming again. Look at it: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us”*—now, underscore this—*“when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). The Lord Jesus—that’s who’s coming again. We’re not looking for some event in history; we’re looking for Jesus Christ to be revealed. And, when He is revealed, He’s going to be revealed as the Lord Jesus. Today, He is despised. He is

rejected. He is mocked. But, He is coming as the Lord Jesus to be glorified and admired. Look at it: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Now, if you’re unsaved, if you’re not one of His saints, His coming will strike stark terror in your heart. But, if you’re saved, you’re going to say, “Oh, glory to the Lamb! Isn’t He beautiful—isn’t He?” He is coming to be admired. That’s the *who* of His coming. Do you see it in verse 7? Say this with me: “Lord Jesus.” Say it: “Lord Jesus.” It’s the Lord Jesus who is coming. *“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner”* (Acts 1:11).

B. Think about the *When* of His Coming

But, think not only of the *who* of His coming, but think of the *when* of His coming. Look in verse 10 again: *“When he shall come”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Do you see that? Say, “When.” Not *if*—*when*. There’s no *ifs*, *ands*, and *buts* about it—Jesus Christ is coming again. “Well,” you say, “are you going to tell us the date?” No, the date—that’s a time known to God alone and Jesus Christ, who said, “Even the angels don’t know that time—only my Father” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32). And, any man who sets a date for the Second Coming of Jesus has committed blasphemy, because the Bible forbids it. But yet, there is a *when*. Not *if*—“*when* the Lord Jesus shall come”; that’s what our verse says (2 Thessalonians 1:10). His coming is like the sunrise—that’s what Malachi said. Malachi said, *“Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise”* (Malachi 4:2). One thing about the sunrise: You can’t hurry it, and you can’t stop it, amen? You can’t hurry it, and you can’t stop it. Jesus’s coming is like the sunrise. The Sun of righteousness—S-U-N, like the sun that comes—it’s coming inexorably. Jesus is coming. We don’t know when. It may be this afternoon at 2:32 that Jesus comes, or some date just like that, but Jesus is coming again. “The Sun of righteousness shall arise” (Malachi 4:2).

I heard about a little boy who, one night, sat up all night wondering where the sun went, and finally it dawned on him. The coming of Jesus is going to be like that. One day, Jesus Christ will pull back the shades of night and pin them with a star, open the door of the morning and flood the world with the sunlight of His presence. What a day that will be! The Lord Jesus is coming again. We think of the *who* of His coming. We think of the *when* of His coming.

C. Think about the Wonder of His Coming

And then, I want you to look with me for just a moment at the wonder of His coming. Look, if you will, in verse 10—watch it: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Do you see the word *admired* in verse 10? The word *admired* literally means “to be wondered at.” It has the idea of awe, wonder. When we see Jesus, we’re not going to see Him as a baby with his little dimpled feet

there in the straw. He will come to be glorified. And oh, how we will wonder! How we will admire Him! Let me mention some things that we will wonder at when we see Him.

1. His Transforming Love

For example, we're going to wonder at His transforming love. Look at verse 10: "*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints*"—"his saints" (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Well, who do you think those saints are going to be? They're going to be those who were stubborn, God-hating, unbelieving, wicked, lascivious people who were transformed—just like some of us. They are going to be those who were once ignorant and blind, who stumbled in darkness, who, as these three young men sang, "have seen the light." These are His saints. They are going to be those who were demonized by sex, and drugs, and greed. And now, they're going to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. And there, when we see them, when we see them with Him—not a vestige of sin, not a spot, not a wrinkle. He's going to be glorified with His saints. Folks, what transforming love!

2. His Amazing Grace

And, we will wonder at His amazing grace. We will wonder not only at His transforming love; we will wonder at His saving grace. Look again at verse 10. It doesn't say, "He's going to be glorified in all of those who gave tons of money to the church." It doesn't say, "He's going to be glorified in all of those who lived impeccable lives, or who were big shots"—"all of those who believe" (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Now, you think of that; don't go past that. Friend, that's grace. Do you know how you get to Heaven? Suppose God said, "Everybody who wants to be saved, run around the block." Some little children can't run. Suppose He said, "Everybody who wants to be saved, read a chapter in the Bible." Some people can't read. Suppose He said, "Everybody who wants to be saved, give 100 dollars." Some don't have 100 dollars. But, He is coming to be glorified in all those that believe.

You say, "That's too simple. Let's do something else." As a matter of fact, we hear today a lot of preaching and prating about "easy believism": "Oh, I'm opposed to easy believism." Be careful when you say that. What do you want—hard believism? Be careful of that, lest you, in your effort to make stronger, better saints, you say, "It's not just enough to believe." Friend, I want to tell you—you listen to me: it is enough to believe in Jesus if you truly believe. I'm not talking about intellectual belief; I'm talking about the belief that says, "Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for one moment of faith." When you put your faith where God put your sin, then that is grace—amazing grace. There's nothing you can do to earn it, buy it, or deserve it. You put your faith in Jesus, and He'll save you, mister, and He'll keep you saved. We'll see that.

Look at these people; they're saints. They're like Jesus. How did they get to be that way? They believed on Him. The Bible says surely, simply, sweetly, sublimely, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and [you will] be saved*" (Acts 16:31). That's amazing! When

we see that, we say, “No—no. It’s got to be more. We got to do something else.” That just chops the legs out of the self-righteous person who thinks he’s going to strut to Heaven by his own good works. God says, “Your good works are like filthy rags in My sight” (Isaiah 64:6). You just cast yourself upon Him in mercy. Put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, when you see Him, you will wonder at His transforming power. When you see the saints, you will wonder at His saving grace.

3. His Keeping Power

I’ll tell you something else you will wonder at: you will wonder at His keeping power. Look again in verse 10: *“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired”*—now, watch this—*“in”*—what’s the next little three-letter word?—*“all”*—say it: “All.” Say it again—*“all them that believe”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Not a’ one is lost—not a’ one is lost. When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, I’m telling you, not one will perish.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never, forsake! (John Keith).

Oh, when we see Him, the Bible says, “We are going to admire Him; we’re going to be glorified” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). And, look at it—look at it—in verse 10: *“(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Oh, thank God for the power of the gospel! *“Our testimony among you”* (2 Thessalonians 1:10)—that’s why I’m preaching; that’s why I got on my knees before I stepped out here. I want you to believe what I’m telling you. You believe in this day, and friend, in that day, you will be in that group called “saints.” You will be in that group because you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will never—no, never; no, never; no, never—forsake you. You will be glorifying and admiring the Lord Jesus with all of those that believe. And friend, that’s what keeps me preaching.

I led a man to Christ a while back—a little old man that came by asking for some money, and I was so busy. I just kind of brushed him off. I just took a little money out of my pocket, and gave it to him, and said, “God bless you.” Ten or 20 dollars, or something—I don’t even remember—and I got back to my business. And, God said, “Adrian, you didn’t talk to him about Jesus.” I said, “But Lord, I’m busy.” He said, “But, you should have witnessed to him.” “I gave him some money.” “That isn’t really what he needs.” “Lord, you know... Well anyway, God, he’s gone.” He said, “You could catch him.” I said, “You’re right,” and I stopped, and ran down the street, and caught him. I said, “Wait a minute. Come back a moment.” I told him about Jesus. He was open. He prayed, received Christ as his personal Savior. I put my arm around him, and hugged him, and prayed for him, and sent him on. I expect to meet him in Heaven. Why?

“Because our testimony among you was believed” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). What a privilege—what a privilege—just to share the amazing grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I can hardly wait for the day when He comes to be glorified and to be admired. And, He’s going to show who’s the King of kings and the blessed and only Potentate.

Now, don’t you get the heebie-jeebies in these last days. Don’t you go around with headline hysteria. *“You who are troubled rest with us”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Jesus is coming again—that we can be sure of—a rock-solid, rock-ribbed hope. And again, I want to tell you, the only hope for this jittery old world is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. I believe that with all of my heart. If you try to do anything else, you’re just rearranging, I mean, *if you were counting on anything else, you remind me of somebody rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic.*

II. You Should Not Be Deceived

Second thing I want to lay on your heart: you should not be deceived. Now, you should not be disturbed, but you should also not be deceived. Now, go to the second chapter. We’re in 2 Thessalonians—the second chapter. And now, notice how Paul continues this: *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him”*—that’s called “the Rapture”—*“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, that the day of Christ is at hand”* (2 Thessalonians 2:1–2)—that literally means “the Great Tribulation.” The day of Christ is a day of judgment that is coming to the world. There were some who were thinking that they were in the Great Tribulation because times were so hard.

And then, he says—look in verse 3: *“Let no man deceive you by any means”*—now, the point I’m making is you should not be deceived—*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doeth already work: only he who now letteth”*—or, “restrains”; “will restrain”—*“until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that*

they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:3–12). The point is we need not be disturbed, and we should not be deceived.

Again, look in verse 3: *"Let no man deceive you"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Now, let me give you the background for this. Paul is writing to the saints at Thessalonica, and they were going through excruciatingly hard times. And, somebody had written a devilish lie, a forged letter, had signed Paul's name to it, and said, "You're already in the Great Tribulation. You have missed the Rapture. You're already in the Great Tribulation." And, Paul said, "Now, wait a minute. Don't be deceived as if you've gotten some letter from us. No, that is not true." Now, it was a lie, and he took the opportunity of a lie to tell the truth, because there can't be a lie unless it's a lie about the truth. So now, he has this truth. He's going to declare the truth.

Now, what has happened in this: from the time that Jesus Christ came into the world, Satan has been moving against Him. Satan moved in the heart of Herod, who is a type of the antichrist, to destroy all the little boy babies, hoping to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ. And, all through His earthly ministry, Satan tried to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, we come to the last days, when Satan will fling his final insult into the face of God. The final blasphemy will consummate not in the Christ, but in the antichrist. The Bible here calls him *"the man of sin"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Look in verse 3: *"Let no man deceive you...that day"*—that is, "the day of Christ"—*"shall not come, except there come a falling away first"*—the words "falling away" mean "apostasy"—*"and that man of sin"*—not a man of sin, but *that* man of sin—*"be revealed, the son of perdition"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Now, this agent of blasphemy is going to be the man of sin. He is Satan's counterfeit of the Christ of Christmas who is coming again, this man of sin. I want you to listen: if you're not careful, you'll be deceived by the spirit of antichrist. So, listen very carefully: this man of sin has many aliases. Right here he is called *"the man of sin"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). I looked this up in other translations. Let me give you some other translations, which will help you to see just who he is. In one place, he was called—the same word—is translated "the man of lawlessness." That is, he will not be subject to the law of God. Another translation gives it "the incarnation of wickedness." Now, Jesus was the incarnation of God. This man—this man of sin: the incarnation of wickedness. Another translation gives it "the champion of wickedness." Another gives it as "wickedness in human form." You see, Jesus Christ was God in human form. There is coming in the last days one who is the devil in human form. The Apostle John called him in the Book of Revelation, chapter 13—he calls him "the beast." In his epistles, he calls him "the antichrist." *Anti* means "against" and "instead of." He is one who is coming who will be against Bethlehem's baby and will show himself instead of the Lord Jesus

Christ. This man the Bible calls *“the man of sin”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Back in the Garden of Eden, history began with the sin of man. It will consummate with the man of sin. He will be the epitome of evil. You see, the devil has always wanted worship. That’s what he’s all about. He wants to be like the most High God. He’s always wanted to be worshiped. “I will be as God. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the most High,” Satan said (Isaiah 14:13–14). Now, we see him in the end of the age—and we’re seeing so much of it today, which makes me believe that we’re at the end of the age—that Satan himself wants to be worship and is finally gaining the worship on the earth that he wants. Look in verse 4—the second chapter—verse 4: it speaks of this man of sin, *“who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God”*—that’s exactly what Satan wanted to do in Isaiah 14—*“or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”* (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Now, that tells us that the temple in Jerusalem is going to be rebuilt one of these days. And, don’t you think that they’re not making plans to rebuild the temple—they are. That’s the reason there’s so much furor over that Temple Mount. Go read today’s newspaper. Look at the news, as I’ve already done this morning. In rabbinical circles, they are not talking about—I’m talking about ultra-orthodox—they’re not talking about *if* the temple is going to be rebuilt; they’re simply talking about *when* it will be rebuilt.

Here’s an Israeli press release: “In the ministry of religion, a document concerning this was put forward, in which proposals from all over the world were collected. Religious activists are for the erection of the temple as soon as possible. There is some opposition, but everything urges toward the building of the temple.” That’s not a Baptist preacher talking. Well, that’s modern news. Yes, but here’s an ancient book that says, “There’s coming a man of sin who’s going to sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). After the Rapture of the Church, in three-and-a-half years, that temple can be erected. After we’re gone, after this antichrist makes a league with Israel, after he says to Islam, “You can have this,” and to the Jews, “You can have that,” they say, “Now, we can erect our temple.”

One of these days, on that Temple Mount that I’ve visited so many times—and so have many of you—there is going to be a temple rebuilt. It doesn’t have to be the magnificent temple that Solomon built or Herod built. It has to be enough to house the Ark of the Covenant, which I believe will soon be discovered somewhere—most likely under the Temple Mount. And, that temple is going to be rebuilt. And, all of the Orthodox Jews around the world are going say, “Now, we can worship according to our ancient traditions.” But then, this man of sin, this beast, this antichrist, this son of perdition would himself move into that temple, and say, “You want to worship God? Well, you are looking at him. I am God.” And, the Bible says in verse 4: *“so that he as*

God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). And, wicked blasphemies will belch out of his heart and out of his mind. It is what the Bible calls "the mystery of iniquity."

Now, it's already at work. Look in verses 6 and 7. You're in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 6 and 7. Now, watch this: "*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time*"—the word *withholdeth* means "restrains"—"*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now lets*"—and that's Old English for "restrain," "will restrain"—"*until he be taken out of the way*" (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7). Now, he says, "*The mystery of iniquity doth already work*" (2 Thessalonians 2:7). There's unbelievable wickedness in the world today. Have you seen it? I mean, it is the mystery of iniquity.

But, there is a restraining force, and he says, "*Ye know what withholdeth that he may be revealed in his time*"—look at it; look at it—"And now ye know what withholdeth" (2 Thessalonians 2:6). Now, what is the *what* there? What is restraining Satan today? May I tell you what it is? It's the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know Jesus said we are the salt of the earth and we're the light of the world? You take the light out, you take the salt out, and corruption begins. Darkness cannot overcome light. Darkness can never turn out the light. We are the light. We are the salt. And, he says, "You know what withholdeth"—but then, it says—"only he who restrains shall restrain" (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7). There's a *what* and there's a *He*. The *what* is the Church; the *He* is the Holy Spirit, who lives in the Church. And, He's restraining the antichrist, holding back the antichrist.

Now, the mystery of iniquity is working, but the Church is here, and the Holy Spirit in the Church is here. But, one of these days—soon, and very soon—friend, we're going home. One of these days, the trumpet will sound, and we're going up and out of here. And then, you have taken the light out, and you've taken the salt out, and the corruption begins. And, when that happens, a floodgate of iniquity is going to come upon this earth. And, you might as well try to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks as to hold back the floodgate of wickedness that will come. You see, right now, Satan is on a leash—he can only go so far. But then, he's going to be released, and Hell will have a holiday. And, demon spirits will infest this earth, and the Great Tribulation will take place.

And, these people had the idea they were already in the Great Tribulation. Paul says, "No—no—not yet." There is a restraint. But, one of these days, he is coming upon this earth. And friend, when that happens—when the antichrist comes—you don't want to be here.

Now, there are some people who get the idea that you can hear the gospel in a sermon like this, and after Jesus comes, then you can get saved. Nope, sorry about that. You refuse Jesus Christ with your eyes wide open—you're going to believe the

antichrist, and God will see to it. Continue to read. Look in 2 Thessalonians—the second chapter—verse 8: *“And then shall that Wicked”—literally, it means “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: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan”—that’s the antichrist—“with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause”—he goes on to say—“God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:8–11).*

When you don’t receive the love of the truth, when you will not accept the truth when it is preached, it is God’s righteous, ironic, poetic justice that you will believe a lie. This antichrist is coming. He’ll be the devil in the flesh. His intellectual genius will be great; his authority—overpowering; his hatred—extraordinary; his techniques—superb. Men will be willing to die for him, and children will betray their parents for him. And, you will believe him because he will come in with all wondrous signs and lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

III. You Will Not Be Disappointed

Now, I had much more I wanted to say about that, but I’m going to move quickly to the third point and take two or three minutes. First of all—listen to me—the Christ of Christmas is coming again; you need not be disturbed. *“Rest with us” (2 Thessalonians 1:7).* Number two: You must not be deceived. Don’t let the spirit of antichrist deceive you. *“Let no man deceive you” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).* Here’s the third thing, and here’s the hallelujah part: you will not be disappointed—you will not be disappointed. Look in chapter 2, verses 13 and 14: *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:13–14).* Now, there are three aspects of His coming.

A. He’s Coming Secretly for His Bride

First of all, He’s coming secretly for His bride.

B. He’s Coming Sweetly Like a Bridegroom

He’s coming sweetly like a Bridegroom.

C. He’s Coming Sovereignly Like a King

He’s coming sovereignly like a King. Now, Jesus—there was no room for Him the first time when He came, no room in the inn. When He comes again, He’s coming as King of

kings and Lord and lords.

Conclusion

The unfinished story of Christmas is this: that Jesus is coming again. And, what Paul is telling us is this: that when He comes, 777 is going to take care of 666. That's what he's saying—that our Lord shall reign. Jesus came the first Christmas to die in the sinner's place; Jesus is coming the second Christmas to receive the sinner to Himself. *Our faith looks backward to a crucified Savior. Our love looks upward to a crowned Savior. And, our hope looks forward to a coming Savior.*

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. Do you know Jesus? “He is coming to be glorified and admired in all them that believe” (2 Thessalonians 1:10). Would you believe on Him? I'm not talking about mere intellectual belief. Will you trust Him? Put your faith in Him. Will you do it now? Would you pray a prayer like this: “Lord Jesus, thank You for dying for me. I believe that You're the virgin-born Son of God. I believe You paid my sin debt with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead, and I now receive You by faith as my Lord and Savior. I trust You now. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me, Lord Jesus”?

Did you ask Him? Then, with childlike faith, thank Him: “Thank You for doing it, Lord Jesus. I receive it by faith, and that settles it. You're now my Lord, my Savior, my God, and my Friend. And Jesus, I will make this public. I will not be ashamed of You. Amen and amen.”

The Coming Man of Sin

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: September 8, 1985

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3

Sponsored by: Sponsor

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

Outline

Introduction

- I. The Disclosure of the Man of Sin
- II. The Prolonged Delay of the Man of Sin
- III. The Deception of the Man of Sin
- IV. The Destruction of the Man of Sin

Conclusion

Introduction

All right. Would you take God's holy Word and turn with me please to 2 Thessalonians the second chapter. Thank you, choir. That was marvelously beautiful, and you've blessed our hearts this morning. Thank you for the hours and the prayers of preparation. Second Thessalonians, the second chapter. The title of our message, as I have already told you, is, "The Coming Man of Sin." I want to read the first three verses. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." In 1870, an educator stood up and he said, "I predict that within 50 years man will be able to fly like a bird." There was a certain bishop, when he heard that this educator had said that, confronted him and said, "Sir, flight is reserved for the angels. And you had better retract what you've said, lest you be guilty of blasphemy. Man will never fly." Now the ironic thing is that that man's name was Milton Wright, and he had two sons, Orville and Wilbur. And, ah, and, of course, in just 30 years after he'd made that blunder, ah, man was there on the beaches of Kitty Hawk and, and this first crude aircraft was indeed in the air. Now that tells me that you'd better be careful what prophecies you make. And you'd better be careful when you say something is going to happen or something is not going to happen

unless, of course, you have the Word of God. Now what had happened here in the Scriptures that I just read to you is this: That someone had made a false prophecy. Someone had written the church at Thessalonica and they had written a false epistle, a spurious letter; they had forged Paul's name to it. They said, "The day of Christ is at hand." That is, literally, the day of the Lord. That is, "We've in the great tribulation." And it panicked them, because it was a false prophecy. It was a satanically-inspired letter, not a Holy Spirit-inspired letter. It was not the Word of God. And so, now Paul is writing to clear up the misunderstanding about the coming man of sin, the beast, the anti-christ, the son of perdition, Satan's superman, who will one day come. So I want us to notice three or four things about this coming man of sin.

I. The Disclosure of the Man of Sin

First of all, I, I want us to look at his disclosure, his disclosure because, you see, the Bible says here in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 that he's going to be revealed, "...and that man of sin be revealed..." Now if he's going to be revealed, that means he's not yet revealed. If he is going to be uncovered, that means he's covered. And, by the way, this word revealed is the word we get our word apocalypse from. And the word apocalypse means an unveiling; that is, something that has been hidden, something that has been covered, and now it is unveiled. Now it is disclosed. Now it is revealed. What he is saying is this: That the anti-christ will be present, but no one will know it until he's revealed, until he's disclosed. Now you think about it. If, as I believe to be correct, the anti-christ will make his appearance after the rapture of the church, and soon after the rapture of the church, and if the rapture of the church could be at any moment, then that means that the anti-christ could be alive and well on earth today. You see, he'll be revealed. He'll be present. But you won't know who he is. You don't know, you won't know where he is until something happens that is going to trigger his disclosure. So there's going to be an unveiling. There's going to be a revelation of the anti-christ. There's going to be a disclosure of the anit-christ. Now he is called by all terms the man of sin, the son of perdition. Now why is he called the man of sin? I'll tell you why. He will be the incarnation of evil. He will be the epitome of sin. He will be the embodiment of filthiness so much that he is called the man of sin. He will be the visible expression of the invisible devil. You remember when the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth? Jesus said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, for I and my Father are one.' The ant, anti-christ could very well say the same thing. If you've seen me, you've seen my father. He will be a son of Satan. When you see me, you have seen my father. I and my father are one. Skip on down to verse 9 and you'll pick it up. "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." He will be to the devil what Jesus Christ is to the Father. Now how do men worship the Father? Through

Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." We know and worship God through Jesus Christ. The devil's unholy ambition has always been to be worshipped. He wants to be worshipped. This man of sin will be the devil's messiah, the devil's evangelist. He will be here to receive worship and to pass that worship on to his father. He is called the man of sin. And so, therefore, he is described in verse 4 as one "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." There is going to be a mockery of God. Satan desires worship. Now learn this about Satan: He doesn't want mere casualties. He wants converts. The devil has a burning, unholy ambition to be worshipped. He says, "I will be like the Most High." Now he desires to be worshipped. One of these days, he will receive that worship through the man that the Bible describes here as the man of sin. And the Bible says that he's going to go into the temple of God, so the temple is going to be rebuilt. I take it the temple is going to be rebuilt right there on the temple mount. And it will be built, I take it, during the tribulation period. It will be built with the help of anti-christ I believe. And then, in the middle of a seven-year period, the anti-christ, the man of sin, will enter into that temple. He'll tell these Jews who are worshipping there, "Away with this worship. There is no God but me. I am God and you will worship me." Now the devil's already had a dress rehearsal for this. Back in the inner-biblical period, from the time when the book of Malachi was written and before, ah, the book of Matthew in the New Testament was written, there was a Syrian general. His name was Anticus Epiphanies. A hard name to remember, but an important name. His name was Anticus Epiphanies. He had an unholy, devilishly-inspired hatred for God's ancient people, the Jews. He took his Syrian army. He marched against Jerusalem, and he massacred thousands of Jews. And then he went into the temple of God and he pillaged the temple of God. And then, after he had pillaged the temple of God and desecrated the temple of God, he set up an image there in the temple of God. And he told the Jews of that day, "You will come into the temple and you will bow to this image and you will worship this image or else you will be put to death." They had the choice – worship the image of the beast or to be put to death. He went on to change the temple into a temple of a pagan god, the temple of Olympus, Jupiter Olympus. And then, after he'd made the image in the holy place, he took what the Jews had known as the Feast of Tabernacles and he made a mockery of the Feast of Tabernacles. He made that into the feast to the god of wine, the feast of the pagan god Baccus. And then, on top of it all, he took a sow, he took a pig and he slaughtered that pig and took the blood of that sow, the blood of that pig, and poured it out there upon the holy altar there in the temple of Jerusalem. And after Anticus Epiphanies had desecrated the temple, after he'd put an image in the temple, after he had sacrificed a sow upon the altar, he then said, "I am God. You will

worship me.” Now the Jews remembered that, and the Jews call that the abomination that made the temple desolate, the Abomination of Desolations. Now Jesus used that as an illustration and as a prophecy of a greater abomination that is going to come when He said in Matthew 24, “When you see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, then get out of Jerusalem because then it’s going to be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of time, nor ever shall be.” It is this time that Paul is talking about also in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 when this man of sin sets himself up in the temple. “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” There is going to be a disclosure. He’s going to disclose himself. People will know when he does this act that he is the anti-christ. The disclosure, the revelation of the coming man of sin.

II. The Prolonged Delay of the Man of Sin

But the second thing, I want you to notice not only his prophesied disclosure, **but his prolonged delay**. Why has he not yet done this? Well, there seems to be someone and something that is restraining him. Notice Paul says, “Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you I told you these things?” Now don’t think, dear friend, that I am, ah, a fanatic because I preach these things. Paul preached the same things. “Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And now ye know what withholding, that he might be revealed in his time.” There’s something withholding him. There is a delay. God has a timetable. Everything is done according to God’s time. Dear friend, I want to tell you nothing has gotten out of God’s control ultimately. As I’ve told you before, I remind you again, the Holy Spirit and God the Father and God the Son never meet in emergency session up in glory. Everything is according to time. And this anti-christ will not appear on the scene one second earlier than God allows. He is delayed. He is being withheld. He’s being restrained. Now notice in verse 7: “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” Now notice he speaks of the mystery of iniquity. What a, what a, a salient term to speak of the power of anti-christ the mystery of iniquity. Why God allows it is even a mystery to some. How sin first came into being, how sin will be ultimately deal with is, is, is something that we’ll only know by revelation from God. All right. But he, he says here that the mystery of iniquity doth already work. And that word work is a very interesting word. It means to work with effectiveness. It is the same word that is used when James is talking about prayer, when he says, “The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” It is, it is something that is working with great power. The apostle John also told us that the spirit of anti-christ is in the world today. And, friend, we don’t have to come face to face with the anti-christ to know there are many anti-

christs, many anti-christs, many of them. And the spirit of anti-christ is in the world. There is one anti-christ who will be embodiment, the summation of it all, but there are a lot of pint-size anti-christs around. There are a lot of, ah, preliminary anti-christs. And the spirit of anti-christ is in this world today. And, and like a, like a mighty Niagara that has been dammed up, it, ah, it, that, that power is waiting to be released. Yet there is a restraining force that is restraining the anti-christ. And, and, my dear friend, let's see what it is that restrains the anti-christ. Look, if you will, in verse 6: "And ye know what withholdeth..." Now underscore the phrase "what." "And ye know what withholdeth..." Underscore the word rather "what." And now look in verse 7 and underscore this: "...he who now restrains will restrain..." Underscore "he." In verse 6 you have a what. In verse 7 you have he who restrains. What forces are holding back the power of the anti-christ? Two. Number one, the church; number two, the Holy Spirit. The what refers to the church; the he refers to the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit works in and through the church. The restraining force, the power that keeps anti-christ, the man of sin, from taking over this world right now and turning this world into one vast, vast concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered is the restraining power of the church. But one of these days that restraining power is going to be taken away. One of these days we're going to be taken out, folks. We're going to be gathered together unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at the first verse in chapter 2. Notice. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus and by our gathering together with him." Amen? We're going. He's coming. And we are going to be gathered. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and we are going to be gathered together with Him." Now when that happens, the what is taken out of the way - the church. And you know what restrains. This church is a bulwark against the forces of anti-christ. Now the world doesn't really like Bible Christians. The world would think that it would be better off without us. But I want to remind you, friend, that Jesus said the church was many things. And among the things that He said we were was salt, salt. Salt irritates. Salt flavors. Salt cleanses. Salt heals. Salt purifies. But I'll tell you something else, friend, that salt does. It preserves. Salt preserves. But the day is coming when the salt of the earth will be taken out of the earth, and then there will come a rottenness and a stench and a corruption like the world has never known. And, you see, the Holy Spirit of God lives in the church, which is the body of Christ. And so, when the church is taken out, the restraining power of the Holy Spirit is taken out. Now the Bible does not say that the Holy Spirit will not be present. Oh, He'll be present because He's omnipresent everywhere. It just simply means that He's going to stand aside then. He's just going to step aside. He's going to say to the anti-christ, "All right. I'm going to give the devil enough time to make an absolute unmitigated fool of himself." And for a while hell will have a holiday. When the church is taken out, when the Holy

Spirit stands aside, then, my dear friend, all hell will break loose on this earth, and to try to ret, restrain the floodtide of la, lawlessness that will come – it would be easier to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks. This anti-christ is coming. He's coming after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. Now we've talked about the disclosure of the anti-christ. He's going to be revealed. We have talked about the delay of the anti-christ. There is a restraining force. You see, the Holy Spirit is here not only to help the Christian or to help the saint, but to hinder Satan. He does both. But one of these days when we're taken out, and the Holy Spirit stands aside, then is going to come that great onslaught of demonism and devil worship.

III. The Deception of the Man of Sin

Now the third thing I want you to notice. It's what I want to call **the deception of the man of sin**. We've talked about the delay of his arrival. I want you to think about the deception that he will bring when he comes. Now notice, beginning in verse 8: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed (remember that's the apocalypse. That's, that's the, we could almost call it the, the second coming of the devil). And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Now watch this: "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness (underscore that phrase), all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion (underscore the word delusion), that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Now this one, this coming man of sin, the beast, Satan's superman, will come with unbelievable power. He will have powers of persuasion. He will have power of oratory. He will have authority. I believe he will use drugs to reduce men's minds to rubble. He will use psychological warfare. He will use intimidation. He will use charm. He will be a global charmer. And one of these days, dear friend, the world will worship at the feet of this anti-christ. He will be such a powerful person that men will honor him, women will swoon at his feet, little children will speak his name with reverence. He will be a household hero. His intellectual genius will be immense. His authority will be absolutely overpowering. The hatreds that he has within his bosom, however, will be extraordinary. His techniques will be so superior. The world has never known anything like it. And he will deceive you. You say, ah, "Pastor, I wouldn't be deceived by the anti-christ, especially after I've heard this sermon." Friend, if you don't get saved and Jesus comes and takes out the church, I promise you on the authority of the Word of God you'll be deceived by the anti-christ. He'll be able to make you think that, ah, black is white, up is down, good is bad, and sweet is bitter. He'll

make you cut your mother's throat with a smile on your face. You'll be so deceived. The Bible says he's coming with all power and signs and lying wonders. "Oh," you say, "I wouldn't be deceived." Jesus said, "If it were possible, he'd deceive the very elect." I mean, dear friend, if it were not that God teaches you as Christians, the Holy Spirit w, ah, the anti-christ would deceive you, were it not for the Holy Spirit of God in you. You would never understand the anti-christ or the power of anti-christ unless the Holy Spirit of God reveals it to you. Now if the rapture comes and the church is taken out, excuse me, when the rapture comes and the church is taken out, those who are left behind will believe the lies of the anti-christ. There is never a second chance for a person to be saved who has willingly, deliberately refused the gospel. Some will be saved in the tribulation period, but no one will be saved in the tribulation period who has heard the truth and refused it. You say, "Pastor, how do you know that?" Well look, if you will, in, in, in verse 12, verses 11-12: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Not only will the anti-christ deceive you. God Himself and His righteous judgment will see to it that you do believe a lie. And actually the word a lie there may be translated the lie or the liar. "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth..." Now these are people who heard the truth, because they believed it not, "...but had pleasure in unrighteousness." You see, when a man comes and hears a preacher preach the gospel, then he has to make a choice. And the choice is not primarily between truth and error. The choice is between truth and unrighteousness. He, re, "...believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." And a man, when he is faced with a gospel message, either must choose the truth or choose his sin. Again, I want to tell you that the, the, the choice is not between truth and error. It is between truth and sin. He is coming as a master of deceit, "...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish..." And this gullible world that mongers after miracles will go after this miracle worker. You say, "Does the devil have power to work miracles?" Of course he does. Turn to Revelation 16...not now, when you get home. Read it later on. We don't have time now. Just listen in a hurry because I'm almost finished. All right, now look. I've talked to you about his disclosure. He's going to be disclosed. He's going to be unveiled. I've talked to you about the delay, however, that keeps him from being disclosed. There is something that is restraining him. There is something that is hindering him. There is someone that is holding him back. That is the church and the Holy Spirit working through the church that will be taken out at the rapture. I've talked about his deception, because when he comes, he is coming with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. He will be the master deceiver.

IV. The Destruction of the Man of Sin

Now let me talk to you, finally, about his destruction. What's going to happen when

he comes, this one who is coming to deceive? Look again in verse 8: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” This speaks of the destruction of the man of sin. What’s going to happen to him? He is going to be consumed with the spirit of the mouth of Jesus. “...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth...” Now what, what, what does that mean, the spirit of his mouth? It means the breath of his mouth. The Latin word spiritus can mean spirit like the Holy Spirit, human spirit, or it can mean breath. The Greek and Hebrew word pneuma. If a man does not believe the truth, it is not because he has intellectual problems. It is because he has moral problems. It is because of the sin in his heart that he loves and cherishes and chooses that keeps him from receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. And I tell you, this anti-christ is coming and he will be a global charmer and a devilish deceiver. Now the next thing I want us to notice. We’ve talked about his disclosure. We’ve talked about his delay. We’ve talked about his deception. Let’s think a little bit about his destruction. Now notice what the Bible says about him in verse 8: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” This verse speaks of the destruction of this coming man of sin. He’s going to be destroyed. And how is he going to be destroyed? Well, notice what the Bible says, “...then the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth...” What is the spirit of the mouth of Jesus? That is the Word of God. The breath of his mouth is what that means, that Jesus is going to speak him into oblivion. You remember in Revelation, the same thing is taught only with a different figure. It tells about the Lord Jesus Christ destroying the anti-christ with the sword that goes out of Jesus’ mouth. Now what is that sword that goes out of His mouth? His Word, the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. When is this going to happen? Well, I’ll tell you when it’s going to happen. At the battle of Armageddon. During a seven-year period after the church is taken out, as I’ve told you, hell will have a hol, holiday. The devil will be the commander in chief through anti-christ of the entire world. And he will at that time want to fulfill his ancient hatred toward God’s people. Since he will have all of the armies of the world at his command, he will gather contingents from all of those armies, gather them together to a place right outside Jerusalem, a great field known as Megiddo or the Mount of Megiddo, Armageddon, Har-megiddo. There a beautiful, great battlefield that Napoleon said was the world’s greatest natural battlefield. And contingents from all of the armies of the world will be gathered there under command of anti-christ. And for one final thrust he will seek to destroy God’s ancient people. You see, they will no longer be worshipping him. They will have turned against him, because when he moves into the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, they will know that that is the utter blasphemy of all blasphemies. And in his hatred he will seek to

destroy the Jews. It's going to be a dark day. It's going to look like there's no hope. Read about it in Zechariah. Ah, the city will be surrounded. Ah, women will be being ravished. There will be starvation. There will be all kinds of horrible things. It looks like at the last moment. And then our Lord will come. This time the Bible calls it the brightness of His coming. That is, He's coming this time in a blaze of shekiah glory.

Conclusion

Now remember, Christ is coming two ways. He has one second coming, but that one second coming is in two phases. First, He comes for His church. That's the rapture. And then He will come with His church. That is the revelation. Notice how He comes first for His church. Chapter 2:1. Look at it. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." That's when He comes for His bride. But now notice in verse 8: "...whom, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." That's when He comes in power and great glory. The first time He comes, He comes in the air and we're caught up to meet Him. The second time, He comes to the earth. The first time He comes to take us away. That's called a mystery. But when He comes in glory, that's called His majesty. And let me tell you what's going to happen. All of the forces of anti-christ will be there. And perhaps there'll be lasers and tanks and airplanes and napon and poison gas and germ warfare and all of these things ready to annihilate the Jews. It's going to look dark. It's going to look terrible. And then, Jesus will appear in His glory. And how's He going to destroy anti-christ? With the spirit of His mouth. It's going to be an amazing battle. Jesus will speak and it'll be over. Let me tell you something, friend. The prefiguring of all of this is in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, even now as He's away praying for us. Into the Garden of Gethsemane Judas came. Did you know that Judas is a type of the anti-christ? As a matter of fact, did you know the anti-christ may be Judas? "Oh," you say, "that's far-fetched." Before you think it's far-fetched, let me tell you something, friend. There's only one other person in the Bible called the son of perdition, other than the man of sin, and that's Judas. You read it in John 17. He's called the son of perdition. There's only one person in the Bible that it is said of him that Satan entered into him. That is Judas. I'll tell you something else. The Bible says that when Judas died, he went to his own place. Could that be the abyss? You read in Revelation that the beast that was, and is not, and shall come ascends out of the pit. That is, he was. Now he's not. But he shall be. Judas was. He is not. He shall be. He ascends out of the pit. And you'll find out also that Satan has the key to that abyss. Be that as it may, I can tell you without equivocation that Judas is a type, a prefiguring of this anti-christ. And so he comes with all of these armies, these soldiers, sticks and starves and swords, and Jesus is praying, as He's

praying for you and me. And Judas comes into the garden; that arch-deceiver, that hypocrite. He is now filled with Satan. He pretends an allegiance to Christ, and he kisses Jesus. But here's the part I want you to see. Now here are all of these soldiers with all of this armor and all of this power. Here's the meek and mild Jesus. He's been praying. He stand up, Bob, and He looks at them and He asks a question. "Who are you looking for?" King James says, "Whom seek ye?" And the Bible says they fell on the ground like dead men, just like dead. All He did was just speak. I mean, here they are with all of these swords and all of these spears and all of this power. "Who are you looking for?" Bang! They fall out just like it. Now He has to pick them up so they can handcuff Him. Jesus said, "No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself." With a word He put them on the ground. I'll tell you, that prefigures, my dear friend, with all of the armies of this world have come to exterminate God's ancient people, and our Lord shall come, and with the spirit of His mouth, with the sword that goeth out of His mouth. The same God that spoke them into existence will speak them into oblivion. Friend, we're on the winning side. You'd better choose sides carefully. The spirit of anti-christ is already in the world. And if Christ comes today to take His church out, you'll be left behind. You will believe the lie. God will send you strong delusion that you will. And you'll go through the horrors of the great tribulation. And then, my friend, you'll be swept into an eternal hell. Let's bow in prayer. You say, "Pastor, that's a dark picture." Well, let me brighten it a little. You can be saved this morning. I mean, right now. You can receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. You, today, can be born again by repenting of your sin and by receiving Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. I wonder in this auditorium how many would say, "Pastor, I know that I'm saved because I have repented of my sin. I have trusted Christ and Him only as my personal Lord and Savior. God's Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. And if Jesus Christ should come for His church today, I'd be ready to go. And if I died right now, I'm confident that I would go straight to heaven." If you can give me that kind of a testimony while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, would you just slip up your hand. Lift it up. That's wonderful. Praise the Lord. I thank God for each of you. And I'm not primarily trying to look to see who you are as much as to get you to lift your hand to make you think, because in a moment like that either you can lift your hand or you can't. Isn't that true? What I'm trying to do is to bring you to a point of saying, "I am ready," or, "I'm not ready." Now, of course, if you could not lift your hand, you're not ready. That doesn't mean these other people are better than you are. We're all sinners saved by the grace of God. It just simply means that they have done what you ought to do, and perhaps will do this morning. They have cast themselves upon the Lord and trusted Him and Him only to save them. So I'm going to ask you today to do the same thing. I'm going to ask you to pray if you couldn't life your hand a moment ago, and receive Christ as your

personal Savior. And in this prayer you can pray something like this: “Oh God, I know I’m a sinner and I know I’m lost. But I know that You love me. Jesus, I believe that You died to save me. And I trust You right now with all of my heart this morning to save me.” And if you say that, pray that, and mean that, He will save you, for the Bible says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Father, I’m praying today that many today in this auditorium will say yes to You and be born again. In Jesus’ precious name, amen.

Satan's Superman

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: August 4, 1991

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

Outline

Introduction

- I. The Mockery of God Is Recounted
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- III. The Ministry of the Spirit Is Removed
- IV. The Mastery of Satan Is Released
- V. The Misery of Man Is Redoubled
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Conclusion

Introduction

We're in a series of messages on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ entitled “Our Coming King,” and these messages are taken from the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. And so, turn with me to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 as we continue in this exciting, thrilling, and challenging subject: “Our Coming King.” And we have told you that Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth. Literally, visibly, actually, Christ is coming again. What a thrill that is to even anticipate His coming! As has well been said, “We ought to live as though He died yesterday, rose this morning, and were coming back this afternoon.” For well indeed, He may, and “*even so, come, Lord Jesus.*” (Revelation 22:20) I begin to read 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 1: “*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 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.*” (2 Thessalonians 2:1–2)

¶ Years ago, I read of a man who always wanted a barometer. So he bought one, a very expensive, minutely calibrated model from Abercrombie & Fitch, to tell the weather. He wanted to set it somewhere in his house, perhaps on his mantle. So he carefully unpacked it, and he looked at it, and the needle was pointing to the sector that says hurricane. Well, he shook it. It still didn't adjust. He shook it again. But the needle just

stayed that way. He said, “Well, as much as I paid for this thing—and now I have a defective barometer.”

He lived on Long Island, and on his way into the city—he was a commuter—he sat down and he wrote a scathing letter to Abercrombie & Fitch for sending him a defective barometer. When he arrived back at Long Island, the barometer was gone, and so was his house, because that was 1938, and the Great Hurricane had come through. There was nothing wrong with the barometer; he just refused to believe that a hurricane was coming. And may I tell you, my dear friend, there’s nothing wrong with the Word of God: It doesn’t need adjusting; it needs believing. †

And God is telling us that there are storms coming to this old world, and this second chapter of 2 Thessalonians warns of this coming howling hurricane called the Great Tribulation. It tells us of the rise of a man called in the Bible the “*man of sin*.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) I’m entitling our message this morning “Satan’s Superman.” There is coming, and I believe there is standing already in the wings, a man who will be the devil incarnate. He will be Satan in human form. And he is called in the Bible “*the beast*.” (Revelation 13) He is called the “*antichrist*.” (1 John 2:18) He is called the “*man of sin*.” He is called “*the son of perdition*.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) And this second chapter of 2 Thessalonians warns us about this one—and we dare not be ignorant.

Now, let me give you the background of the two verses that I’ve just read to you. The apostle Paul says that Christ is coming, but then in verse 2 he says, “Don’t be shaken in mind, or be troubled.” Now, why were these people shaken? Why were they troubled? Well, a bogus letter had gone out, a forged letter. Somebody had signed Paul’s name to it and told these people they were already in the Great Tribulation; the Day of the Lord had come. Notice verse 2: “*That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us,*”—that is, some bogus letter that pretends to be from us—“*as that the day of Christ is at hand*.” (2 Thessalonians 2:2) Now, remember, “*the day of Christ is at hand*”—this may literally be translated “the Day of the Lord, the Tribulation, is already here.” And there were some who were feeling that they were already in the Day of the Lord, that dark day that I was telling you about, that Great Tribulation; that they had missed the Rapture, and that they had gone into the Tribulation.

And the apostle Paul is using the occasion of a lie to tell the truth. That’s what I want to do today. I want to use this opportunity to tell you the truth concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and those things that are about to transpire. And I have looked at this passage, and I have divided it up into six headings. And I want you to look at them very carefully with me this morning.

I. The Mockery of God Is Recounted

And the very first thing that I want you to see this morning is how the mockery of God is recounted. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 3: *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come,”*—that is, the Day of the Lord, the day of Christ, shall not come—*“except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3–5)

There is coming an awful mockery of God. And Paul recounts this mockery of God that is to come. Now what he says is this, that Satan is going to fling one final insult into the face of heaven’s King. And the agent of this blasphemy, the agent of this insult to the Almighty, is going to be what the Bible calls the *“man of sin.”* Notice verse 3: *“That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

Now when the Bible uses the term the *“man of sin,”* it is one of the many aliases in the Bible for the Antichrist. As a matter of fact, earlier this morning, I read this passage through in about five or six different translations. Some call the man of sin “the man of lawlessness.” Another translation called the man of sin “the incarnation of wickedness.” Another translation called the man of sin “the champion of wickedness.” Another translation called the man of sin “wickedness in human form.” The *“man of sin,”* “the epitome of evil,” “the distillation of the demonic”—all of these are terms that describe this character who is about to appear on the stage of human life—the *“man of sin.”* The *“man of sin”* speaks of his character. He’s also called *“the son of perdition”* in this same verse—*“the son of perdition.”* The word *perdition* means “judgment.” And he is destined for divine destruction. He is going to be the devil in human form. He will be the devil incarnate.

Satan is always God’s imitator. Martin Luther called him “God’s ape,” meaning by that, that he imitates God. Satan’s burning ambition has always been, “I will be like the Most High.” So if God has His Christ, Satan has his Antichrist. Now the prefix *anti*—and, by the way, the apostle John is the only one in the Bible who uses the term *antichrist*, but he uses it over and over again—the prefix *anti* means two things: number one, it means “against”; but, number two, it means “instead of.”

And that’s exactly what the beast is. He is against Christ, but he also presents himself instead of Christ. The devil has always wanted to be worshipped. And as Jesus Christ is to the Father, the Antichrist is to the devil. Jesus could say, when He was here on earth, “He that has seen me has seen my Father.” (John 14:9) The Antichrist would be able to say, “He who has seen me has seen my father.” Only, his father is the devil,

as you will see. He will be Satan in human flesh.

You see, the devil has always wanted the undiluted and undisguised worship of men. So, notice what he is going to do. In verse 4, he's one *"who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."* (2 Thessalonians 2:4) Now, learn this about the devil: He doesn't want casualties; he wants converts. The devil wants worship *"so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."* With burning eloquence and ambition, the devil had said in Isaiah chapter 14, *"I will be like the most High."* (Isaiah 14:14) He's always wanted to be worshipped. He's going to receive that worship through this one that the Bible calls the *"man of sin," "the son of perdition."* It's very interesting.

Verse 4 says he's going to sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. "Well," you say, "Pastor, how can he do that? There is no temple. The temple was destroyed in 70 AD." You're correct. But the temple will be rebuilt. You say, "Do you believe that?" Yes, I do. I believe that the temple is going to be rebuilt shortly after the rapture of the church. There will be a three-and-a-half-year period when the Antichrist will hold sway. He will make a league with the nation of Israel, and he will put all of the resources of the world into building there for the Jewish people a magnificent temple. You say, "Do they want a temple?" Of course they do. In some rabbinical circles, the question is being considered already whether the time has come to erect a temple in Jerusalem.

Let me give you a recent quotation from Israel. The Israeli press says—and I quote—"In the ministry of religion, a document concerning this was put forward in which proposals from all of the world were collected. Religious activists are for the erection of the temple as soon as possible. There's some opposition, but everything urges toward the building of the temple." And in a recent ceremony, Israel's minister of education, Abner Shaki, saw a model of the seven-branched temple candelabra. An artist, Chaim Odem, who is an immigrant from the Soviet Union, designed that candelabra that will go in this temple. And the only thing that's kept them from building it—or one of the things that has kept them from building it—it takes ninety-five pounds of gold. One American businessman, Moshe Prager, has already pledged 800,000 dollars to build this seven-pronged candlestick for the temple.

Here's a report that comes from Jerusalem: "Rabbi Yisrael Ariel cautiously opens the door to a special treasury located in the Old City with a number of keys. This is the entrance to a study and research facility for temple equipment. To the question, 'Is it time to build the temple?' the rabbi answers, 'Ezra and Nehemiah did not wait for a temple to come down from heaven, but they laid on hands to make it a reality.' Yisrael Ariel and his associates have already created some remarkable works, among which

are silver trumpets, priests' robes, a wash basin, a harp, and even a box for casting lots to select the scapegoat. Everything is done precisely and in accordance with Scripture instructions." So one of these days, the temple will be rebuilt. And the Antichrist may even now be standing in the wings.

Look, if you will, in verse 3: "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) Do you see the word *revealed*? Now he can be present and not be revealed. The word *revealed* is the word *apokalypsas*; it's the word we get *apocalypse* from, and it literally means "an unveiling." Perhaps some character, some person alive today, is that one who will step onto the stage and will become what is known as the beast, the Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition. But I just simply want to say that Paul recounts the mockery of God. There's coming one who will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)

II. The Mystery of Iniquity Is Restrained

Secondly, not only is the mockery of God recounted, but the mystery of iniquity is restrained. Now, look in verse 6: "*And now ye know what withholdeth that he*"—that is, the Antichrist, the beast, "*the son of perdition*"—"might be revealed in his time." (2 Thessalonians 2:6) Now there is something that is holding back, restraining, this Antichrist. Notice in verse 7: "*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*" (2 Thessalonians 2:7) Now the word *letteth* in the King James Version of the Scripture means "restrained." So he's saying the mystery of iniquity is already at work. The mystery of iniquity was at work in Paul's time. And the word *work* means "to work with power." What the apostle Paul is saying is there is a force—a wicked, malevolent force—that he is calling "*the mystery of iniquity.*" It is that force that will energize the Antichrist. He said, "It is at work in my time." Certainly, you and I are seeing works of antichrist today. But those works are restrained. That is, it's as if the devil is on a leash. This devilish conspiracy, the Bible calls "*the mystery of iniquity.*"

Now, what is "*the mystery of iniquity*"? Well, "*the mystery of iniquity*" is a plot hatched in hell. It is a devilish conspiracy against the human race by an unseen spirit world. May I tell you, there are spirit beings that the Bible calls "demons." They are organized. They are brilliant. They are invisible. They are powerful. And they are tireless. "Well," you say, "I don't believe in demons." May I remind you that medieval doctors didn't believe in bacteria—but they were harmed by them. And the Bible says in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) There is a mystery of iniquity. But the Bible teaches that it is

restrained, that it's being held back. Now the mockery of God is recounted, but the mystery of iniquity is restrained. There is something, someone, somehow keeping Antichrist from doing what he wants to do.

III. The Ministry of the Spirit Is Removed

So, move to the third thing. The ministry of the Spirit will be removed—the ministry of the Spirit will be removed. Now, notice verses 7 and 8: *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth”*—that is, “he who now restrains”—*“will [restrain] until he be taken out of the way.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:7) Now, notice the word “he,” and just put a circle around “he.” *“And then shall that Wicked...”*—notice the word “Wicked” is capitalized; it means “wicked one”—*“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.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8) Now, go back to chapter 2, verse 6: *“And now ye know what withholdeth.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:6) Now, put a circle around the word “what.” And then in verse 7, you have a circle around the word “he.” There is a “what” that is restraining the man of sin, and there is a “he” who is restraining the man of sin. Now there is someone and something that is holding back Antichrist.

Now may I tell you that verse 6 speaks of the church, and verse 7 speaks of the Holy Spirit. Where does the Holy Spirit abide? He lives in us. He resides in us, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the “what” in verse 6. And the “he” is the Holy Spirit, who lives in the “what.” The Holy Spirit lives in me. And as long as the church is here, then the Antichrist cannot have full sway, because when the Antichrist comes, God is going to pour out His wrath upon this world. But, you see, my dear friend, God has *“not appointed us to wrath.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:9) And the church is here restraining the power of Antichrist.

You see, the church is *“the salt of the earth.”* (Matthew 5:13) What does salt do? Well, my friend, salt cleanses. Salt purifies. Salt flavors. Salt penetrates. Salt preserves. When the salt is taken out, the corruption will begin. The Holy Spirit of God is in the church. Now the Holy Spirit is the “he,” who has two ministries. Ministry number one is to help the saints; ministry number two is to hinder Satan. There's only so far that Satan can go, and God allows Satan to have power, but not all power. Even when Satan wanted to harm Job, God said, “There's only so far that you can go.” That is, Satan is on a leash.

But one of these days, the ministry of the Spirit is going to be removed. At the rapture of the church, when the church is taken out, the Holy Spirit's influence through the church will be removed from this earth. That doesn't mean the Holy Spirit will not be here. There's no place where the Spirit is not. The Bible says, *“If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.”* (Psalms 139:8) God is everywhere. What he is talking about is

that the power of the Holy Spirit manifest through the church is going to be taken out. The “*what*” in verse 6 is the church; the “*who*” in verse 7 is the Holy Spirit taken out at the rapture of the church.

Notice how Paul began this thing—chapter 2, verse 1: “*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.*” (2 Thessalonians 2:1) When He comes, “the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which remain and are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17) And when we are taken out, the Holy Spirit stands aside. And then this “*mystery of iniquity*” that has been restrained will be restrained no more. And when that happens, dear friend, to stop the flood tide of filth and iniquity and cruelty and horror will be impossible. You might as well try to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks as to stop the flood of wickedness that will come to this world.

IV. The Mastery of Satan Is Released

So that brings me to the fourth thing. The fourth thing: The mastery of Satan is released. Now, begin in verse 7, and look at it here. He says here in verse 7, “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*” (2 Thessalonians 2:7–10) What a terrifying passage this is!

Now, remember this: The man of sin is going to be Satan incarnate. He is going to receive power from the devil himself. Verse 9: “*Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*”

What will this Antichrist be like? I’ve called him “Satan’s Superman.” His intellectual genius will be immense, his authority overpowering, his hatreds extraordinary, his techniques superb. Men will be willing to die for him. Women will swoon at his feet. Little children will speak his name with reverence. The Bible says the entire world will marvel, will wonder, at the beast. (Revelation 17:8) When I use the word *beast*, don’t get the idea of someone who is ferocious outwardly, who is repulsive outwardly. Oh no! This speaks of his character, not his appearance.

You see, the beast is the second person in the unholy trinity. God has a Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The devil has an unholy trinity: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The dragon is Satan; the beast is the Antichrist; the false prophet is the sinister minister of propaganda, who will cause people to worship the beast, as the Holy Spirit causes people to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this lawless one is going to ride into power on a platform of fame and fortune, and the biggest plank in his platform is going to be world peace. Put in your margin Daniel 8, verses 23 through 25. Don't turn to them, because we are running out of time; let me just read these verses to you: *"And in the latter time of their kingdom,"*—he's talking about certain kings—*"when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up."* (Daniel 8:23) *"Fierce countenance"* means that no one can stand against him. *"Understanding dark sentences"* means that he has probed the occult. And verse 24: *"And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power:"*—that is, he's receiving power from the devil—*"and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."* The holy people are the Jews. *"And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart,"*—and listen to this next phrase—*"and by peace shall destroy many"* (Daniel 8:24–25)—*"by peace."* That is, he will come as an imitation of the Prince of Peace. He will make a peace treaty with Israel. At last, Israel will say, "Our messiah has come."

Jesus knew they would do this. In John chapter 5 and verse 43, Jesus said, *"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye shall receive."* (John 5:43) This coming devil's messiah will come out of the unified Europe that we are seeing take form right now before our eyes. He will make a peace treaty with Israel. He will help them to rebuild their temple. But as soon as it's rebuilt, he will move into that temple and say, "You want to worship God? Well, you're looking at him. I am God." And at that time, this one who has done such lying wonders will turn on God's ancient people with unspeakable wrath. That's what the Bible calls *"the time of Jacob's trouble."* (Jeremiah 30:7) It's the time that Jesus warned about when He said, *"For then shall be great tribulation."* (Matthew 24:21)

You see, the devil has power—he has power to work miracles. Look again in verse 9: *"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."* (2 Thessalonians 2:9) You say, "I wouldn't believe his lies." My friend, I'll promise you, you'll believe his lies if you go into the Great Tribulation after having heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and refusing it. *"For this cause God shall send them strong delusion,"*—the Bible says—*"that they should believe a lie"*—because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:11–12)

You say, "I didn't think the devil had power to work miracles." Well, you'd better read Revelation chapter 16, verses 13 and 14: *"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon,"*—that's the anti-God—*"and out of the mouth of the beast,"*—that's the anti-Christ—*"and out of the mouth of the false prophet"*—that's the anti-Spirit. *"For they are the spirits of [demons], working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that*

great day of God Almighty.” (Revelation 16:13–14)

What I’m trying to say is, my dear friend, there’s coming a time when hell will have a holiday. There is coming a time when the church is taken out, the Holy Spirit stands back, the leash is removed, and Satan’s mastery is released. And Satan will have his way on this world, and he will rule through his vice-regent, the *“man of sin,” “the son of perdition.”*

V. The Misery of Man Is Redoubled

The fifth thing I want you to notice: The misery of man is redoubled. The mastery of Satan is released, and the misery of man is redoubled. Look, if you will now, in verses 11 and 12: *“And for this cause God shall send them”—who? The people on earth—“strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:11–12) They sat in a church like this and heard a preacher tear his heart out and beg people to be saved. But oh no, they wanted their own selfish, sinful way; *“they received not the love of the truth.”* They *“had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* They wanted their own sins. And the Bible says, *“That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:12)

The misery of man is redoubled. Antichrist, when he comes, is going to turn this entire world into a vast concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered. What will he be like? He will be the Caesars, the Napoleons, the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Khomeinis, the Saddam Husseins, all melted into one person.

We’re going to speak later, perhaps, about the mark of the beast. But computers will help him regiment everyone. Already we’re being regimented. Now these people have gone beyond the normal credit card that we use, and now there are *smart cards* that have computer chips in them already—and you just turn in your card, and it tells all about you. It would be a very easy thing to take the chip out of the *smart card*, and put it in human flesh, or on human flesh. As a matter of fact, all across America right now pets are being taken care of that way. The veterinarian is putting a little computer chip about the size of a grain of rice in the ear of a pet to help keep up with lost pets, and to help the owners to relocate those pets.

You’ve been given numbers, and I’ve been given numbers. I tried to get into a government facility yesterday. They said, “Well, what is your Social Security number?” Well, I didn’t know that was given to control me or to identify me when it was first given. It was only simply a number so they were supposed to be able to pay me. But now financial institutions and other companies are using it for identification purposes. And I notice now that my Social Security number is on my driver’s license. And now the IRS is giving a Social Security number to all little children two years of age. Before long, every

child will get a number.

I was reading recently where someone has said, “The way to take care of prisoners today—we can’t build enough prisons, but what we can do is to control them through computers.” I quote: “In the total control monitoring incorporated system, the prisoners are required to wear an ankle bracelet which accompanies a cellular sending unit. If the prisoner wanders outside a designated radius, the sending unit emits a message to the monitoring device, operated by Brink’s, who then, in turn, alert the correctional authority. The sending unit can be tracked by the monitoring computer and its whereabouts determined at any time company officials indicate it.” That just reminds me of something that I read a long time ago. The more machines act like men, the more men will act like machines. And we’re getting regimented, and the technology is in place. And I am telling you, dear friend, there is coming a time of terror that is coming upon this world, and the misery of man will be redoubled.

VI. The Majesty of Jesus Is Revealed

I don’t have time to go into that because my time is getting away, but let me come to the last point—and this is the glorious part. Now if you think that I am pessimistic, friend, you are looking today at a flaming optimist. I want to tell you, from the resurrection of Jesus Christ onward, there is not a pessimistic note—not one! The apostle Paul is not writing here to threaten these people; he is writing here to comfort these people and to give them hope. And so, the last thing I want to mention: The majesty of Jesus is revealed. When the mastery of Satan is released, that only becomes the black velvet upon which the diamond of His glory will shine all the more. Begin reading in verse 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 8: *“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:8) I love that: *“...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”* What is the brightness of His coming? The word *brightness* here literally means “the outshining, the glory, the majesty” of His coming.

Now you need to understand about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ: While it is one event, there are two phases to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, He comes for His church, and then He comes with His church. Look, if you will, in chapter 2, verse 1: *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him”* (2 Thessalonians 2:1)—that’s His coming for His church. But now, notice in verse 8: *“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”*—that’s when our Lord comes with His church. First, He comes for His bride; then, He comes with His bride.

This is the reason that some of the people have difficulty understanding the Second Coming of Jesus and the Rapture. The Rapture, dear friend, was a mystery revealed in the New Testament, not taught in the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets didn't understand the Rapture. They did understand the coming of our Lord in power and glory. But they did not understand the rapture of the church. And the apostle Paul says, *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."* (1 Corinthians 15:51–52) The Rapture is the mystery.

You see, dear friend, there's the mystery of His coming, and the majesty of His coming. The mystery of His coming is the Rapture. The majesty of His coming is the revelation, when He comes in brightness and power and great glory. There are many figures of speech. The Lord Jesus is coming suddenly like the lightning—Matthew 24:27. (Matthew 24:27) He's coming like a bolt out of the blue. The Lord Jesus is coming secretly like a thief—1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 2. (1 Thessalonians 5:2) We've already talked about that. The Lord Jesus, however, is coming sovereignly as a king—and that's what we're talking about right here in verse 8. My dear friend, Antichrist is going to be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.


What is going to happen is this: Antichrist will turn on the Jewish nation. After the temple has been rebuilt, he will ensconce himself in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4) At that time, Israel will realize how betrayed they have been. They are not about to worship any two-legged devil. At that time, my dear friend, Satan's fury will be poured out against God's ancient people. Antichrist, who will have the world's rulers and the world's armies at his disposal, will gather a contingency from all of the armies of the world and have them bivouacked at Armageddon, the valley there of Jezreel-Esdraelon. They will be there—army after army after army will be there—at that place that Napoleon said was the world's greatest natural battlefield. They will be ready to destroy Israel and finally annihilate, exterminate, these dear people that God so dearly loves.

Just when Antichrist, drunk with power, is about to make his final move, then heaven will open, and Jesus will come—this time, not for His saints, but with His saints. The Bible says the armies that are in heaven will follow Him. And then, the Bible says, the Lord will destroy him with the spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

You say, "What is the battle of Armageddon going to be like?" I've told you already. While Antichrist comes with napalm, and lasers, and atomic warfare, and nerve gas, and miracles, we just have one weapon on our side: It's a sword. And it's in the mouth of our King: *"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged*

sword.” (Hebrews 4:12) And He’s going to utter two words and the battle will be over. And I’ve told you what they are: “Drop dead!” The Bible says, “He will slay them with the sword that goeth out of His mouth.” (Revelation 19:15) And so ends the career of Antichrist. And 7-7-7 will take care of 6-6-6. And I’m so glad, dear friend, that we have the Word of God. I’m so glad that we don’t have to sit in darkness.

Conclusion

But the question comes: Are you ready? The question comes: Are you saved? Because if you’re not saved, and the Rapture comes, and we’re gathered together to meet the Lord Jesus Christ, and you’re left behind, the Bible says God will send you strong delusion, that you would believe a lie. (2 Thessalonians 2:11) The Antichrist will cause you to betray your mother with a smile on your face. You’ll take the brand of the beast, and then you’ll go into hell. Satan gives you a number; Jesus gives you a name. And He calls His sheep by name. (John 10:3) And He’s calling you today. 

The Man of Sin

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: May 16, 1982

Main Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

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Introduction

I want you to take your Bibles and turn to 2 Thessalonians, the second chapter. The message that we have this morning, in my estimation, is a significant message, and it deals with something that we all need to be aware of—and that is the coming superman that Satan will put here upon this world: the beast, the Antichrist, the man of sin, the lawless one.

I want to read to you now 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 1: *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 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. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,*

and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth”—literally, “he who now restrains”—“will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:1–12).

Now these are terrible days in which we’re living, and fearful days in which we’re living. I want to share with you two ads from *The New York Times* that have recently appeared. The first ad that I want to share with you is one full-page ad that says, “The Gospel According to Four Religious Leaders.” And here is a picture of the Rev. Rich Anguin, the Rev. Charles Stanley, the Rev. Jerry Falwell, and the Rev. James Robison. I know three of these men; they’re beloved brothers in Christ. This ad is sponsored by people called People for the American Way, headed up by Mr. Norman Lear, the man who has written and directed—or somehow oversees—some of the most hilarious films on television today. And there are quotes by these men that are taken out of context.

And for example, Rev. Rich Anguin has said in this particular thing, “Freedom of speech has never been”—has never been—“right. We never have had freedom of speech in this country, and we never should have.” Now that quote is taken there; and put as it is *The New York Times*, it seems like a terrible and salacious quote. But we all know that freedom of speech unlimited is not a right we have. Nobody has a right, for example, to yell “Fire!” in a crowded theatre. Nobody has the right to slander or assassinate the character of another, and that’s the reason why we have libel suits. And so freedom of speech is not unlimited; but here, as you would hear this man speak, in taking that one statement out of context, it makes it sound as though he is against people expressing their right. Friend, if there is anybody who believes in freedom of speech, it is gospel preachers, because they’re trying to put the muzzle on them and keep them from preaching the gospel in this day and this age.

Here’s a quote from Rev. Charles Stanley: “We do not want a democracy in this land, because if we have a democracy, a majority rules.” Now that sounds bad. But taken out of context, it sounds bad; put in context, it’s wonderful. What Charles Stanley is saying is this—and I agree: “A democracy is a rule by the many.” We, in America, do

not have democracy. What we have is a republic. Do you know what a republic is? “I pledge allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands.” A republic is a rule by constitutional law, and that’s what we have. And therefore, a group of people cannot just get together and work against—or move against—the rights of the few. And the few have their rights protected by our constitutional law. And therefore, we are not governed by a majority, but we are governed by a document called the Constitution. And we have constitutional law, and that’s the reason we call it a republic. But taken out of context, it makes Charles Stanley seem like he doesn’t believe that we, as Americans, have a right to vote, or to rule our country, and so forth.

And here is one by Jerry Falwell: “The idea that religion and politics don’t mix was invented by the devil to keep Christians from running their own country.” The idea is, according to this, that Christians are supposed to enforce their laws upon everybody else; but that’s not what Jerry had said, nor what he means. What he means is that, if God’s people, and the good people, and the godly people, get out of politics, who does that leave to run everything? The ungodly and the immoral. And as Noah Webster says, “Whatever makes a man a good Christian makes him a good citizen at the same time.”

But here is something that is so twisted, and so perverted, and paid for by big dollars, and asking for dollars, and it says, “Your most precious possession”—one of your most precious possessions—“is being threatened, and that is freedom.” And that’s why Norman Lear and these others have started People for the American Way, and so forth. And then, they ask for money to help shut down people like this. Well, Jesus predicted that the days were going to come when we, if we love the Lord and stand for the truth, those who kill us will think they do God a favor (John 16:2).

Now right along with that ad that was recently in *The New York Times*, I want to share with you another one. Here’s a full-page ad, April 25—just last month, the end of last month—1982. Listen to this one now in contradistinction to the other ad that was just recently in *The New York Times*: “The world has had enough of hunger, injustice, war. In answer to our call for help, as world teacher for all humanity, the Christ is now here.” Now here’s a full-page advertisement telling us that Christ has arrived: “How will we recognize him? Look for a modern man concerned with modern problems—political, economic, and social. Since July 1977, the Christ has been emerging as spokesman for a group or community in a well-known modern county. He is not a religious leader but an educator in the broadest sense of the word, pointing the way out of our present crisis. We will recognize him by his extraordinary spiritual potency, the universality of his viewpoints, and his love for all humanity. He comes not to fudge but to aid and inspire.

“Who is the Christ? Throughout history, humanity’s evolution has been guided by a group of enlightened men, the Masters of the Wisdom. They have remained largely in the remote desert and mountain places of Earth, working mainly through their disciples

who live openly in the world. This message of Christ's reappearance has been given primarily by such a disciple, trained for his task for over 20 years. At the center of this spiritual hierarchy stands the world teacher, known by Christians as the Christ. And as Christians await the Second Coming, so the Jews await the Messiah; the Buddhists—the fifth Buddha; the Muslims—the Imam Mahdi; and the Hindus wait for Krishna. These are all names for one individual. His presence in the world guarantees there will be no third World War.

“What is he saying? ‘My task will be to show you how to live together peacefully as brothers. This is simpler than you imagine, my friends, for it requires only the acceptance of sharing. How can you be content with the modes within which you live, when millions are starving and dying, when the rich parade their wealth before the poor, when each man is his neighbor's enemy, when no man trusts his brother? Allow me to show you the way forward into a simpler life, when no man lacks, when no two days are alike, where the joy of brotherhood manifests itself through all men. Take your brother's need as a measure of your action, and solve the problems of the world.’

“When will we see him? He has not as yet declared his true status, and his location is known only to a very few disciples. One of these has announced that soon Christ will acknowledge his identity—and within the next two months...”—now, this was April 25th when this was written—“within the next two months, he will speak to humanity through a worldwide television and radio broadcast. His message will be heard inwardly, telepathically, by all people in their own language. From that time, with his help, we will build a new world.” And then, he says: “Without sharing there can be no justice. Without justice there can be no peace, and without peace there can be no future.”

Not only was this ad placed in *The New York Times*, but it was placed in major newspapers around the world at a cost of a one quarter of a million dollars—in Paris, Tokyo, and other major cities. Christ is here according to this. Don't believe it—don't believe it. Jesus said, “Many shall come [in the last day], saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:5). You say, “Brother Rogers, do you think that this is the Antichrist in this particular ad?” I don't think so—maybe, but I don't think so. But what an illustration of the language, the mode, the methods, the media, that the Antichrist will use—the beast, the man of sin!

And all of us have an impending feeling that we're living in the closing days of this dispensation, when good, godly, gospel preachers that I personally know are publicly, militantly...and have taken what they say out of context, exactly as they took what Jesus said out of context. When Jesus said, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” (John 2:19), they said, “Jesus said destroy the temple,” and they said that “Jesus said that the temple was to be destroyed.” They took His word, and cunningly and cleverly twisted His words, and so crucified Him. And so they would do

with God's men today.

And I want to remind you again, the Bible says, "The day is coming"—Jesus Christ was preaching—"when they who kill you will think they do God a favor" (John 16:2). And Bible-believing Christians now are going to be separated pretty soon from those *Sunday-morning glories*, who come in the morning and fold up at night. Some of you here, I mean, you just bloom in the morning, and that's about it; and you think you've done God a favor by getting here. And I want to tell you something, friend: The time is coming when there is going to be a separation of God's people. People ask me, "Brother Rogers, do you think the world is getting better or worse?" I say, "Yes—yes." I want to tell you, *as the days get darker, the saints get brighter*. And Jesus said, "*When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*" (Luke 21:28).

Now the scripture that I just read to you from 2 Thessalonians, the second chapter, is Paul's answer to a false religious teacher. What had happened is this: that somebody had written a forged letter. He signed Paul's name to it; he had sent it to the church at Thessalonica. And this is what he'd said—he said, "We're already in the Tribulation. The day of Christ—the day of the Lord—is here." And these Christians were all perturbed. They didn't understand; they were confused. And so Paul is telling them not to be shaken.

Notice what he says, in verses 1 and 2: "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind,*"—"don't let this person frighten you; don't let him blow you off center"—"*or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us*" (2 Thessalonians 2:1–2). That is, "I didn't send a letter, but there's some false letter that has come to you—it's a forgery; it's a fakery. It is spurious scripture. I did not write it. Somebody wrote it; somebody told a lie." And Paul said, "Don't you let it shake you, and don't you let it disturb you."

And then, Paul took that forgery and used it as an occasion to preach the truth concerning the Second Coming of our Lord and some truths concerning the man of sin that is going to come. And we're going to look at the man of sin this morning. And that is the title of our message: "The Man of Sin." World history began with the sin of man; it will end with the man of sin. Now there are some people who tell us that world history did not begin with the sin of man but it just began with slime, and ooze, and primordial mess, and that man just evolved out of that, and that man sprang from the beast. Man did not spring from the beast; man is headed to the beast. Man is headed to the Antichrist, the beast, that last world ruler, who is Satan's superman.

And so in the scripture that we have before us, we need to learn some things, especially in this day when false christs are arising all over the world—and they are; this

is just not an isolated incidence. False christs are all over; some of them are here in the city of Memphis, Tennessee. And so there are six significant facts that I want you to see—six things that come in a special sequence that I want you to study with me, as Paul answered this, concerning this mysterious letter. And I pray God that God will give me the power, the unction, the function, and the emotions to drive in under your souls this morning, because these are days not to be asleep. Many Christians have been chloroformed by the spirit of this age, and they need, dear friend, to have God's Word as an alarm clock to jolt the daylight into them.

I. The Mystery of Iniquity Is Restrained

And so let's look at the first thing I want you to see, and you may take notes of these six things. Number one: The mystery of iniquity is restrained—the mystery of iniquity is restrained.

Now begin reading again in verse 3—Paul says, *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?”* Now watch especially verses 6 and 7: *“And now ye know what withholdeth that he”—the man of sin—“might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3–7).

There is a force that the Bible calls *“the mystery of iniquity”*; there is a devilish force in the world. Sometimes people ask me, “Brother Rogers, do you believe in the conspiratorial theory of history?” I do, but it's not what they're thinking about. I'm not talking about a communist conspiracy, though there is one. I'm not talking about the Trilateral Commission, or some international bankers. That may be a conspiracy, but there is a bigger conspiracy than many people have ever dreamed to think of. And it is a plot and a conspiracy that was hatched in Hell and has been launched upon this world by demonic forces. For the Apostle Paul says, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...[and] spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12).

There are spirit beings—demon spirits. They are organized. They are brilliant. They are invisible. They are powerful. They are tireless, and they are working. You say, “I don't believe in that.” Well, I want to remind you that medieval doctors didn't believe in bacteria, and because you can't see it or because you don't understand it does not mean that it is not there. There is a real spiritual world, and the devil is working. And the Bible says, *“The [spirit] of iniquity doth already work”* (2 Thessalonians 2:7). And t he

word for *work* here is the word that means, “to work with force, and power, and effect.” An *effectual* working is the same word that James uses, when he says, “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (James 5:16). The word *effectual* that James uses is the same word that is used here for *work*. The mystery of iniquity is effectual—it is effectual; it is working. And all around—and this newspaper ad, these two ads, my dear friend—is the mystery of iniquity that is working.

But yet, there is a hindrance; there is a restraint. God has said to the devil, “You can go so far, but no further.” God still has this world in His control. No matter what the devil does, and no matter how vile or evil he is, God is still in control. Never forget that. *There is no panic in Heaven—just plans.* God knows exactly what He’s going to do. His Word will not return unto Him void (Isaiah 55:11), Brother Jim. And God has told us aforetime that nothing is going wrong when these things happen; that, God says, everything is right on track. But so, God has restrained evil. God has said to the devil, “You can go so far, but no further.”

Do you remember there, when the devil would try to persecute Job...? Indeed, he did persecute Job—and God gave the devil permission to cause Job’s sickness, and suffering, and sorrow, and all of these things. But then, God said to the devil, “Devil, you can only go so far, but no further. That’s it. You cannot take his life” (Job 1:12). And so God allowed the devil to have tremendous power, but God limited the power of the devil.

So the first thing I want you to see is, according to this scripture, that the mystery of iniquity is restrained. And “He who restrains will restrain, until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). That’s the first fact.

II. The Ministry of the Spirit Is to Be Removed

The second fact: The ministry of the Spirit is to be removed—the ministry of the Spirit is to be removed. Look in verses 6 and 7: “*And now ye know what withholdeth that he*”—the man of sin—“*might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way*” (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7).

Now here’s an interesting thing. Look in verse 6, and it says, “*And...[you] know what withholdeth.*” And then, in verse 7, it says, “*he who [restrains].*” Now is the restraint a *what* or a *who*, because in verse 6 it speaks of a *what*, and in verse 7 it speaks of a *He*, or a *who*. Well, actually, it is both. You see, what is the restraining force? What is the power that is holding back the mystery of iniquity in the world in which we live? It is a two-fold power.

A. The Church

First of all, it is the Church. *“And...ye know what [withholds]”*—the Church. Did you know that we are here in this world as a bulwark against evil and against Satan, and one reason that Satan cannot have his way in Memphis, Tennessee is Bellevue Baptist Church? Did you know that? And these other churches that are preaching the gospel. And one reason the devil has just not already taken this world to Hell *just like that* is because of people like us—we’re here.

Do you know what Jesus called us? *“The salt of the earth”* (Matthew 5:13). Do you know what salt does? Salt purifies. Salt cleanses. Salt flavors. Salt penetrates. Salt agitates. Salt irritates. And there are people who are irritating me right now, because salt irritates. But I’ll tell you something else salt does: salt preserves. And when the salt of the earth is taken out of this earth at the Rapture of the Church, then the restraint will be gone. And the salt that has been a restraining force will be taken out. And that’s when the real corruption, that’s when the real rottenness, that’s when the real purification will take place.

You see, Paul talks about our being taken out. Look in chapter 2, verse 1: *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering...unto him”* (2 Thessalonians 2:1). One of these days, He’s going to come. We’re going to be caught up to meet our Lord in the air. Hallelujah! What a day that will be! Maybe today, it may be, that we’ll be taken out. And the *what* that restrains will be gone—that’s the Church.

B. The Holy Spirit

But then, the *He* who restrains also will stand aside. Notice in verse 7: *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way”* (2 Thessalonians 2:7). That is the Holy Spirit. Do you see the Holy Spirit has a two-fold ministry? He has a ministry to help the saints but also a ministry to hinder Satan. And you see, it is the Holy Spirit. You remember when Jesus said, *“Greater is he that is in you, than he that is the world”* (1 John 4:4)? Who is in the world? The spirit of Antichrist—the devil. Who is in us? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is greater than that hellish spirit; and as long as He’s there, the devil is restrained.

But the Bible says, *“[when] he be taken out of the way.”* Now it doesn’t say, “that He be taken away.” There’s no way the Holy Spirit can be taken away. If the Holy Spirit were taken away, then nobody would be saved during the Tribulation period or any other time. And some souls will be saved during the Tribulation, and some will be saved in the millennium; but we’re not going to get into that, because that’s deep water. But let me just say, it does not say that He shall be taken out of the world; it says, *“He [shall] be taken out of the way”* (2 Thessalonians 2:7). It literally means, “He’s going to stand

aside.”

You see, there’s no place where God’s Holy Spirit isn’t. God’s Holy Spirit is in Hell. God’s Holy Spirit is in Heaven. God is omnipresent. There is no place where God is not—never could be. If God is omnipresent, God is everywhere. That’s because He’s God. But you see, He’s going to step aside; He’s going to just step out of the way. Up until this time, He has been restraining people and things, because His precious people, the Church, are here. But when the Church is taken out, then the Tribulation is going to come.

And so what I’m trying to say is, first of all, we see that the mystery of iniquity is being restrained; but then, secondly, we see that the ministry of the Spirit is to be removed. The Holy Spirit is going to stand aside; and, when He does, then all Hell is going to break loose. It’ll be like a dam bursting. There will be an avalanche of sin, and violence, and murder, and rape, and torture, and drug addiction, and perversion that will spew over this land. And no one will be able to stop it. You might as well try to dam up Niagara Falls with toothpicks as to stop the floodtide of wickedness that will come when the restraint is removed. The spirit of iniquity is working, but it is restrained. But when the restraint is taken away, when the Church is gone, when the Holy Spirit stands aside, then Hell will have a holiday.

III. The Mastery of Satan Is to Be Released

So that brings us to the third point. First point—the mystery of iniquity is being restrained; the second point—the ministry of the Spirit is to be removed; the third point—the mastery of Satan is to be released. Look, if you will please, in verses 3 through 5: *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Now what does this *falling away* mean? Some people think it means that we’re going to fall away from the faith, because it’s the word we get our word *apostasy* from; but I don’t think that’s what it means. I believe there will be an apostasy in the last days; but I want to tell you, there was an apostasy in Paul’s day. And I believe there will be Bible-believers in the last days. There were Bible-believers in Paul’s day. What does this word *apostasy* mean? It literally means, “a standing aside, or a turning aside.” I believe it refers to the Holy Spirit. I believe that he’s saying that the Antichrist cannot come until the Holy Spirit steps aside, till the Holy Spirit just lets him have his way.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, sheweth himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). Verse 9: *“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan*

with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Now what is this man going to be like? You see, the majesty of Satan is finally going to be realized. Satan has a master plan, and his master plan is tied up in a master man. Now what is Satan's master plan? Satan's master plan is to be worshiped. He always has wanted to be worshiped. We're going to talk about that in a moment; and so, in order to get that worship, he creates a man—a very special man—that he is going to live through. This man is called here, in the Bible, *"the son of perdition."* Notice, in verse 3, he's called *"the man of sin"*; he is called *"the son of perdition."* He is called in other places in the Bible *the beast*. He's called in other places in the Bible *the Antichrist*.

Now remember this: that just as there is a Holy Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—there's also an unholy trinity—the devil, the beast, and the false prophet. The beast is the middle person in that unholy trinity. The devil is the anti-God. The beast is the Antichrist. The false prophet is the anti-Spirit. And so this man will be called, here, *"the man of sin"*—literally, "the lawless one." What we know today as constitutional law, or any law, will go by the board; and yet, this man will come preaching peace, exactly as this ad did. And Daniel says, "Through peace he will destroy many" (Daniel 8:25). And the Bible says, "When they say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction will come upon them" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). This man will come on his platform, and he will ride into power on the wheels of fame and fortune. He will be the devil incarnate.

Again, the Bible says, in verse 9, that his *"coming is after the working of Satan"*—listen to it—*"with all power and signs and lying wonders,"*—he'll be able to make you think good is bad, black is white, up is down. He'll be able to get you to cut your mother's throat and feel good about it. He will be such a deceiver. "Oh," you say, "he won't deceive me." The Bible says, "He'd deceive the very elect, if it were possible" (Matthew 24:24)—*"...all deceivableness of unrighteousness"* (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10).

Listen. He will be an intellectual genius. He will have authority that is overpowering. He will have hatred that is extraordinary. He will have techniques that are superb. And men will be willing to die for him. Women will swoon at his feet, and little children will speak his name with reverence. He will be Satan's superman. Some believe he may be Judas come back to this world. And before you laugh at that, let me tell you something: The Bible calls him *"the son of perdition."* The only other person ever called *"the son of perdition"* was Judas—called that way in the Bible, *"the son of perdition"* (John 17:12).

Now notice that Paul doesn't say, "a son of perdition"; he says, *"the son of perdition."* In his Bible studies, the Greek says that the use of the definite article means that he's talking about a specific person: the son of perdition. Have you ever thought about

Judas? Judas is the only man in the Bible, where it says that “*Satan entered into him*” (John 13:27). Other people may be demon-possessed, but nowhere does it say that Satan entered into them. Sometimes people say, “Well, the devil has been on my trail today.” I think I know what you mean, but you’re flattering yourself. One of the devil’s weakest demons could take care of most of us.

But listen. The Bible says that Satan entered into Judas before he betrayed Christ. The Bible also said, in Acts, the first chapter, and verse 25, when he died, that he went “*to his own place*” (Acts 1:25). He did not go to the ordinary place that persons go to when they die—either to Heaven or to Hell. I believe he went to *the abyss*. And you read in Revelation chapter 9, where the devil has the key to the abyss—the bottomless pit (Revelation 9:1). And he’s able to free those who are incarcerated there in the abyss—the bottomless pit.

And then, you read in Revelation chapter 17, where the Bible speaks of the Antichrist that will come, and the Bible says, “He was, and he is not, and he shall be” (Revelation 17:8). Judas was; he is not; he, perhaps, shall be. Is this the one—is this the one—who the devil will raise up in some mockery of the resurrection and reincarnate into Judas, his very own personality and power, and there deceive the whole world? It’s worth thinking about.

But whether it is Judas reincarnated or not, I tell you the Bible says that there is coming a man of sin that the Bible calls “*the son of perdition*.” As I’ve told you three things thus far—I’ve said, first of all, the mystery of iniquity is now restrained; I’ve told you, secondly, the time is coming when the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be removed; and then, the mastery of Satan is going to be released. And he will have a holiday, and the devil will have his way—unhindered, unfettered, unleashed—except that God is still overruling in the heavens.

IV. The Mockery of God Is to Be Rehearsed

The fourth thing I want you to see—not only is the mastery of Satan to be released, but the mockery of God is to be rehearsed. I want you to notice what this Antichrist is going to do when he takes control. What is the man of sin going to do?

Look in verses 3 and 4: “*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*”—listen to this—“*who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). The temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt.

The Bible prophesies that that temple that was torn down, that temple that Jesus said “not one stone will be left upon another” (Matthew 24:2), will one day be rebuilt.

And one day, the Antichrist himself will move into it; one day, he will take possession of it. He will move right into that temple; he will desecrate that temple. And in that temple that has been built for the worship of Jehovah, he will declare, “I am God.” He will show himself that he is God; he will be a megalomaniac. He will be a person who, with a devil-inspired, feverish brain, will actually call himself *God*. You see, the devil has always wanted to be worshiped. The devil’s vain ambition is to be like God. Isaiah chapter 14 saith, “*I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the most High*” (Isaiah 14:13–14). That’s what the devil has said.

Now the devil has worship today. All false religion is one form or another form of devil worship—all false religion. The devil is not against religion. The devil knows the religious instincts of men; and so, the devil uses those religious instincts of man for his own purpose. *The devil is in the religion business up to his ears. He’s not against religion; he’s in favor of religion so long as it is not centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the people in America don’t need religion; they need to turn from religion to Jesus Christ.* They need to be saved, be born again, to have a personal experience with Jesus Christ.

So this Antichrist is going to move into the temple, and the devil is going to receive the worship he wants through Antichrist. God the Father receives the worship He wants through God the Son, and the beast is going to be to the devil what the Lamb is to the Father—the beast is to be to the devil what the Lamb is to the Father. And men will worship the devil. You see, the devil has worship now, but he’s not satisfied with that. The devil wants open worship. The devil wants undisguised worship. The devil wants unfettered worship, and the devil wants worldwide worship. And the Bible says, in the Book of the Revelation, all the world will worship the beast (Revelation 13:4). He will come to “*the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Now we’ve already had a dress rehearsal of that in the Interbiblical Period. In the period between the close of the Book of Malachi and the writing of the Book of Matthew—there’s a period known as the *Maccabean Period*, or the *Interbiblical Period*—in that time, a Syrian king named Antiochus came on the scene. He had first had a military excursion against Egypt. He was repulsed and turned back. He turned his anger and vented his wrath upon Jerusalem, and he came to Jerusalem and slaughtered thousands of persons; and those who would not follow him were immediately slaughtered. Some apostate Jews followed him and received favor from him; but most of them would not, and they were put to death. And this man took the temple, and he pillaged the temple. He ransacked the temple and looted the temple. And then, he reA consecrated the temple to the pagan god, Jupiter Olympus.

And then, he set up an image in the temple—an image of himself. And he said, “Everybody who will not worship this image of me will be put to death.” He took the

Feast of the Tabernacles and changed the Feast of the Tabernacles to the Feast of Bacchus. Bacchus is the pagan god of wine, and bacchanalian orgies, and profligate living, and ungodliness, and licentiousness. And he took the Feast of Tabernacles and said, “No longer. Now it will be the feast to the god of wine, the god Bacchus.” And then, to further desecrate that holy place, he took a pig, and slaughtered it, and sacrificed it upon God’s holy altar; and then, he said, “I am a god.”

And what that was, ladies and gentleman, was an abominable thing. It made the temple desolate. Jesus called it *“the abomination of desolation”*; and then, Jesus said, in Matthew chapter 24: “When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, get out of Jerusalem...for then will be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:15–16, 21). Remember that. Well, what Jesus is referring to is what had already happened—this abominable thing that had desolated the temple. Jesus said, “When you see something like that happen, then get out—get out; flee. Don’t go back to your house to get anything. “Woe to those who are with child in that day...for then shall be great tribulation, such as not from the beginning to the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:19, 21)—great tribulation.

And so what I am saying, dear friend, is that God is going to be mocked. You see, why does he move into the temple to say it? It is a willful, deliberate, open attempt to mock God—to ridicule God. So here are the steps: Number one, you see that the mystery of iniquity is being restrained; number two, the ministry of the Spirit will be removed; number three, the mastery of Satan will be released; number four, the mockery of God will be rehearsed as this Antichrist moves into *“the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”*

V. The Misery of Man Is to Be Redoubled

And then, the fifth thing I want you to see: the misery of man is to be redoubled—the misery of man is to be redoubled.

Look, if you will, in chapter 2, beginning in verse 9—the Bible speaks of the Antichrist, and it says, *“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;”*—underscore the word *perish*—*“because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”*—literally, “the lie”—*“that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”* (2 Thessalonians 2:9–12).

These verses speak to us of the worldwide sway that Antichrist will have over mankind. He will virtually, for a while, be a world dictator. He will come just as this ad

says, saying that he's going to give peace. But what he's going to do—through the aid of the computer, he's going to turn this world into a vast prison, a concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered. Everyone will receive a number. You'll not be able to buy or sell, if you don't have that number.

Somebody has said, "The more machines act like men, the more men will act like machines." I was seeing the news last night, and they have a new thing now in the grocery stores—when you check out all the groceries, you just rub that thing. Of course, you've already seen this—that little code there: *bdtt, bdtt, bdtt, bdtt*—5,000 dollars, all right. There it goes—*just like that*. But now, it speaks to you—a little voice up there. It says, "Can of salmon—20 dollars; oatmeal—42 dollars." And it just calls it out there, you see; it just speaks to you. And this little machine now is talking to you. It tells you what you bought; it tells you the price of it. How many of you saw that on the news, last night? See, I'm not fibbing. Okay, here's a machine just speaking to you—just speaking to you. The time is coming when you will not be able to buy or sell if you do not have the number that has been given to you. And this mastermind—this Antichrist, this man of sin—is going to control the whole world. And Jesus said there will never be a time like it.

Now there has been tribulation, but this will be a time, my dear friend, not of trouble, but a time of double trouble. It will be a time when the spirit of hatred, and war, and famine, and disease, and persecution, and torture, and terror will run unhindered. Demon spirits will come out of the pits as the devil releases them. Revelation chapter 9, verse 6 says, "In those days men will desire to die, and death will flee from them" (Revelation 9:6). They'll be like a narcotics addict in a padded cell, wanting to end one's life and cannot do it. And what people today call *death* will be a welcome release during this Tribulation period. Jesus said, "There's never been a time like it," when Hell has a holiday, when the man of sin, the son of perdition...when men finally have their way. Mister, when they get what they want, I can promise you they will not want what they get. The misery of man is redoubled.

VI. The Majesty of Jesus Is to Be Revealed

But I won't close there. I want to say one last thing of these six things that I've said. Finally, the majesty of Jesus is revealed—the majesty of Jesus is revealed. Look in verse 8—the Bible says, "*And then shall that Wicked be revealed,*"—that is, the Antichrist—"*whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming*" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

You see, Antichrist is 666, but Jesus is 777. And 777 is going to take care of 666. "Whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming and the spirit of His mouth." What is the spirit of His mouth? That sharp two-edged sword with which He will smite the nations. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back.

Now when the Bible speaks, in verse 8 here of Antichrist being destroyed, it's really speaking of the Battle of Armageddon. Now let's get some things straight. Jesus comes first for His Church; then there will be seven years of tribulation, when the Antichrist will rule. And then, Christ will come with His Church at the Battle of Armageddon. And so there are two aspects to the Second Coming of Christ. First, He comes for His Bride; and then, He comes with His Bride. The first coming is His mystery coming; the second of these comings is His mastery and majesty comings. The first time He comes in the air; the second time He's coming to the earth. The first time is the Rapture; the next is the return, when He comes back to this earth again.

A. The Mystery

You see, look, if you will, in chapter 2, verse 1: *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him"* (2 Thessalonians 2:1). That's the mystery part. Paul says, "Behold, I show you a mystery: that we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: at the last trump we're going to be caught up to meet the Lord *just like that*" (1 Corinthians 15:52). That's the mystery.

B. The Majesty

But then, here is the majesty. Notice here, in the last part of verse 8: *"Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8). That's where He comes in majesty. You see—listen, I'm almost finished—there are several figures in the Bible that describe the Second Coming of Jesus.

1. He Is Coming Swiftly Like Lightning

First of all, He's coming swiftly like the lightning. He says, in the Gospels, "As the lightning shineth from the east unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). Like a clap of thunder, like a bolt out of the blue, suddenly, quickly, Jesus is coming. He doesn't send a newspaper ahead of time to say, "Get ready. I'm coming." No, no. Like the lightning flashes, Jesus comes. He's coming swiftly as the lightning.

2. He Is Coming Secretly as a Thief

He's coming secretly as a thief. And the Bible says, in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, that He's *"[coming] as a thief in the night."* A thief doesn't write you a note and say, "About three weeks from now, on a Thursday, I'm going to stop by your house." No, no, no. Jesus is coming swiftly as the lightning. Jesus is coming secretly as a thief.

3. He Is Coming Sweetly as a Bridegroom

He's coming sweetly as a bridegroom, and the Bible says that He is the bridegroom.

And one of these days, Matthew chapter 25, verse 6, says, we're going to hear the voice of the friend of the bridegroom say, "*Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him*" (Matthew 25:6). What a day that will be!

4. He Is Coming Sovereignly as a King

But friend, not only is He coming swiftly, not only is He coming secretly, not only is He coming sweetly, but He is coming sovereignly. He is coming to rule and to reign sovereignly as a king, and that's what verse 7 says, and verse 8: "*The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth*"—or, "restrains"—"*will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed,*"—the Antichrist—"*whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming*" (2 Thessalonians 2:7–8). Jesus is going to reign.

Listen, friend. Do you remember what Paul told these people in Thessalonica? He said, "Don't be disturbed. Don't be shaken. I'm going to tell you what's going to happen." And God is telling us what's going to happen, and God is telling us to get ready. It's going to be wonderful when Jesus comes.

Oh, my dear friend, He's going to be glorified; He's going to be magnified. Look in chapter 1, verse 7: "*And to you who are troubled rest with us,*"—chapter 1, verse 7—"*when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*" (2 Thessalonians 2:7–10). And I want to be standing in the front row admiring Him, don't you?

Oh, listen! The first time He came, He stood before Pilate; when He comes again, Pilate will stand before Him. The first time, He wore a crown of thorns; when He comes again, He's going to wear a royal diadem. The first time He came, He rode a lowly donkey; when He comes again, He's going to ride a white charger. The first time He came, dear friend, He came to a tree; when He comes again, He's coming to a throne. The first time He came to redeem; the second time He's coming to rule. His majesty is going to be displayed.

Conclusion

Are you ready? I mean, are you ready? Are you ready if the Rapture, that secret part, should take place today? It well could.