**The Man of Lawlessness**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-5**

**Wednesday Evening**

**November 17, 2021**

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-7**

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

**1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.**

Saints, this introduces the main topic of this letter. He had already taught them about the coming again of the Lord and how all believers will be gathered together to meet him.

Apparently, Paul had heard further questions from these believers, so he added more details about what would happen at Christ’s second coming. Also, he knew that persecution was taking its toll on the believers,

So, he wanted to teach them and encourage them. Verse 2 describes one of the false teachings about Christ’s second coming. Some were saying that the day of the Lord has already begun. This final event of history has two aspects to it:

**1. The Last Judgment on all Evil and Sin**

**2. The Final Reward for Faithful Believers**

At that time, God will intervene directly and dramatically in world affairs. Righteousness and truth will prevail, and Christ will judge sin and set up his eternal Kingdom. First, there will be much suffering, for evil will climax as the end draws near.

False teachers were saying that the judgment day had already begun. This caused many believers to wait expectantly for vindication and relief from suffering. These false teachers had claimed to have had a vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from Paul and his companions apparently stating what the false teachers were teaching.

Saints, Paul does not identify the source of this false teaching any further, so we do not know. When Christ didn’t come and when suffering continued, the believers were becoming shaken and troubled. These words picture unsettled minds and a continuing state of anxiety. They certainly wondered if they had somehow missed out or if they were not going to be saved.

Paul assured them that they should not be worried by these false teachers and should listen to him, instead. Paul’s authority as an apostle and their relationship of trust with him should affirm that any teaching that contradicted what he had given them needed to be questioned.

Saints, Paul had shown that he would answer the Thessalonians’ questions directly himself or send one of his coworkers. At the end of this letter, Paul would sign with his own hand to authenticate this document.

Paul told them plainly that the day of the Lord had not yet come; three other events would have to happen first.

**1. The Rebellion must occur**

**2. The Man of Lawlessness must be Revealed**

**3. The Restraint of Lawlessness must be Removed**

**3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,**

Saints, the coming of the day of the Lord will be “like a thief in the night”

**1 Thessalonians 5:2**

“For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night”

Saints, even so, certain events will precede it. The final day of the Lord will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed. This “rebellion” will be a massive revolt against God. It may begin among those who believe in God and spread to all people who refuse to accept Christ.

Thus, it will include Jews who abandon God and some members of the church whose faith is nominal. While rebellion against God seems widespread even today, as the coming of Christ nears, this apostasy and active opposition against God will intensify.

During the rebellion, a remarkable man will come into public view. He will have considerable power from Satan and will personify evil. Throughout history, certain individuals have epitomized evil and have been hostile to everything Christ stands for.

**1 John 2:18**

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour”

**1 John 4:3**

“and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world”

**2 John 1:7**

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist”

Saints, these “antichrists” have lived in every generation, and others like them will continue to work their evil. Then, just before Christ’s second coming, “the man of lawlessness,” a completely evil man, will arise. He will be Satan’s tool, equipped with Satan’s power.

This man will oppose all law, both God’s moral laws, as well as civil laws. He will promote immorality and anarchy. This “lawless” man will be the Antichrist. He will have been in the world, but then he will rise to power and notoriety, shown by the word “revealed.”

The book of Revelation speaks of a “beast” that symbolizes the Antichrist.

**Revelation 13:5-8**

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Saints, the beast symbolizes the Antichrist—not Satan, but someone under Satan’s power and control.

**Revelation 16:13**

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet”

**Revelation 19:20**

“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone”

Satan’s evil will culminate in a final Antichrist, a man who will focus all the powers of evil against Jesus Christ and his followers, bringing destruction. Yet even this man, for all the power that he will attain, is ultimately doomed to destruction.

**Revelation 20:10**

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever”

Saints, God still reigns and his victory is certain. The evil man will be destroyed, but not before God uses him. During this time of great rebellion, the full extent of wickedness will be demonstrated and rebellion against God will be shown in all its horror and ugliness.

Always, through all suffering throughout the ages, God is drawing people to himself, calling them to repent. This will continue during those last days.

**4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?**

Saints, this man of lawlessness will attempt, and even will seem to be able to, dethrone God and anything else that is worshiped (idols, nature, self), and then will demand worship and obedience to himself alone.

Saints, he phrase, position himself in the temple of God pictures one who proclaims that he himself is God. Many have claimed such allegiance throughout history (Roman rulers, various political leaders) and many have been pointed out by others as being the Antichrist, but this one human, yet to come, will be the final, decisive personification of lawlessness, evil, and rebellion against God.

This description of the man of lawlessness is similar to the description of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was predicted in Daniel.

**Daniel 11:36-37**

36 "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37 He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

Saints, it also refers to the “sacrilegious object” noted in Mark.

**Mark 13:13-19**

3 And you will be hated by all men for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

15 Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. 16 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his garment. 17 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18 And pray that your flight may not be in winter.

19 For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

Saints, this refers to the desecration of the Temple by God’s enemies through pagan idolatry and sacrifice (see Deuteronomy 29:16-18; 2 Kings 16:3-4; 23:12-14).

**Deuteronomy 29:16-18**

16(for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, 17 and you saw their abominations and their idols which were among them--wood and stone and silver and gold);

18 so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;

**2 Kings 16:3-4**

3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

The first fulfillment of such an abomination occurred in 168 B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes.

He sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the sacred Temple altar. This act incited the Maccabean wars. The second fulfillment occurred when Jesus’ prediction of the destruction of the Temple (Mark 13:2) came true.

**Mark 13:2**

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

In A.D. 70, the Roman army would destroy Jerusalem and desecrate the Temple. Some scholars say that a third fulfillment is yet to come. This may look far forward to the end times and to the Antichrist. In the end times, the Antichrist will commit the ultimate sacrilege by setting himself up (perhaps having a statue erected) and ordering everyone to worship him.

**Revelation 13:14-15**

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Saints, apparently, Paul had taught the Thessalonians about the second coming of Christ and the end times. Either they had forgotten his teaching, or the false teachers had been confusing them.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**