

Please take your Bibles and turn with me to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

We are looking this morning at verses 8-12 in this second message on “The Man of Sin.”

Paul has already given us *his description, his activity, and his restraint.*

And now we’re going to see *his end and his power.*

Speaking of *his end and his power*, Paul says beginning at verse 8:

“Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an **end** by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the **activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the**

deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

For the third time now, we hear about this man of sin as he is described in verse 8 as “the lawless one.”

This man will have no regard for the things of God or the law of God.

Referring back to verse 4, Paul says he “opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

The only worship he doesn't oppose is the worship of himself.

In fact, he will demand the whole world worship Him.

This is the mid-point in the 70th week of Daniel.

Three-and-a-half years earlier, he successfully brought peace with Israel and her neighbors but as verse 4 reveals that peace will be short lived.

No longer will Israel be protected by this man of sin.

Now they are persecuted by him.

Verse 4 tells us that he desecrates the temple by "displaying himself as being God."

Both Jesus (Mat.24:15) and Daniel (Dan.9:27) refer to this as “the abomination of desolation.”

By this one event, the depths of the Antichrist’s evil nature is revealed.

Now verse 8 gives us...

HIS END (v.8)

The Lord Jesus will “slay [him] with the breath of His mouth and bring to an *end* by the appearance of His coming.”

In this verse, the apostle skips over the career of the Antichrist and describes his ultimate doom.

It almost sounds as if he will be destroyed as soon as he is revealed. But that of course is not so.

He is allowed to conduct the reign of terror described in verses 9–12 before he is brought down at Christ’s coming.¹

Revelation 20:20 says, “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; **these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.**”

Just as Antichrist will be revealed at God’s appointed time, so also is the moment of his destruction divinely ordained.

At the height of his power, when he seems invincible, he will meet his end.²

¹ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). 2 Th 2:8.

² John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002). 280.

Daniel 7:26 says, “His dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.”

Daniel 11:45 notes that “he will come to his end, and no one will help him.”

Revelation 17:11 declares that Antichrist “goes to destruction,” and that destruction is graphically described in Revelation 19:20 that we just read.

The most hellish and powerful ruler in human history will be effortlessly crushed; the Lord will slay him with the mere breath of His mouth.

The term “slay” does not mean that the Lord will kill Antichrist (the ^{niv} translates it “overthrow”), since Revelation 19:20 says that he will still be alive when he is cast into the lake of fire.

^{niv} New International Version

Robert L. Thomas notes: “Some have supposed a discrepancy between the fate of these two [the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet] and that of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thess. 2:8 ..., but harmonization of the two accounts of Christ’s return is quite easy. The verb ... *anelei*, “destroy” used by Paul [in 2 Thess. 2:8] does not necessarily mean physical death. It can also refer to relegation to the lake of fire because the literal force of ... *anaireō* [the root form of *anelei*] is “I make an end of.”³

The concept that the Lord will destroy His enemies with the breath of His mouth stems from the Old Testament.

Isaiah 11:4 says that the Lord “will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.”

³ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 397.

Revelation uses the similar picture of a sword coming out of the Lord's mouth to destroy His enemies (1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21).

The parallel statement “and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming” adds a slightly different magnitude to Antichrist's destruction.

The phrase “bring to an end” (*Katargeō*) literally means, “to render inoperative,” “to abolish,” or “to render ineffective.”

Not only will the Lord slay (destroy) Antichrist's person, He will also bring to an end his empire.

Christ will annihilate both the man and his enterprise by the appearance of His coming, a reference to the visible manifestation of Christ at His second coming (Rev. 19:11–21).⁴

⁴ John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002). 281.

Paul gives us one more statement concerning the man of sin and that is in reference to...

HIS POWER (vv.9-12)

The power in which the man of sin operates is in “accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness” (vv.9-10a).

The career of this wicked one resembles that of Satan because he is energized by him.

The word “activity” (energeia), comes from the root of our English word “energy,” which describes *power in action*.

It usually refers to God’s power but here it describes Satan’s power.

Antichrist's power and signs and false wonders will not only be deceptive tricks, like falsifying his own death and resurrection (Rev. 13:3, 12, 14; 17:8, 11), *but also actual manifestations of Satan's supernatural power.*

Paul uses three words to describe the energy of this man of sin:

“Power” (miracles; cf. Matt. 7:22; 11:20, 21, 23, etc.) refers to supernatural acts.

“Signs” point to the one who performs them.

“Wonders” describes the astonishing results.

The Antichrist's miracles will reveal his supernatural power and create wonder, shock, and astonishment.

cf. *confer* (Lat.), compare

Now when he inserts the word “false” (*Pseudos*), he is referring to all three terms.

The Antichrist’s miracles, signs, and wonders are “false” not in the sense that they are fakery but that they lead to false conclusions about who he is.

They will cause people to believe the lie that he is a divine being and worship him.

John saw that Antichrist’s deluded followers “worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?’” (Rev. 13:4; cf. (vv. 12–15).

cf. *confer* (Lat.), compare

vv. verses

Antichrist will mislead the world, according to verse 10, “with all the deception of wickedness” at its disposal.

John MacArthur says, “He will muster all of evil’s undiluted, unrestrained, seductive power to tempt the world to give him unprecedented influence over it.”⁵

He will unscrupulously use every form of wickedness to deceive the perishing people—those who heard the gospel.⁶

He says in verse 10 that the Antichrist’s influence will extend to “those who perish.”

Only God’s elect will not be taken in by him but not so for unbelievers.

⁵ John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002). 282.

⁶ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). 2 Th 2:10.

They will fall for the lies of Satan, just as they have done now.

But during this time, Satan will deceive them through the man of sin.

Revelation 19:20 refers to them as those who “receive the mark of the beast and those who worship his image.”

Why will they be duped by the man of sin?

Verse 10 says, “Because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”

Paul says they will fall to the Antichrist’s influence because of their unbelief---they “did not receive the love of the truth.”

That doesn’t mean they didn’t hear or understand it.

They did!

But they did not “love” it!

What did they not love?

The “truth” which includes both “the word of truth, the gospel” as Colossians 1:5 says, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate (Jn. 14:6).

Unbelievers do not welcome either Jesus or the gospel He proclaimed.

The Bible clearly teaches that those who go to hell do so because they reject the truth.

John 3:19-20 says, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. “For everyone who does

evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

In John 5:38-40, Jesus said to unbelieving Jews: “You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”

He reiterated that truth later in John 8:24, 45-47:

“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”

Because the unredeemed “did not receive the love of the truth” they “do not know God and ... do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (1:8).

They willfully choose to love their sin, believe Satan’s lies, and hate the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are like those Jewish leaders described in John 12:42–43 who “believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

In Matthew 10:37 Jesus taught that salvation involves loving Him above all else: “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

According to verse 11, the terrifying reality is that God will seal the fate of those who hate the gospel by sending “upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false.”

Even though the Antichrist will deceive people with satanically empowered false miracles, signs, and wonders, his deception only will succeed because it fits into God’s sovereign purpose.

He will sentence unbelievers to accept evil as if it were good and lies as if they were the truth.

Those who continually choose falsehood will be inextricably caught by it.

In the words of Proverbs 5:22, “His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin.”

They will be abandoned by God to the consequences of their choice to reject the gospel.⁷

The story of Pharaoh is a grim reminder that God will judicially harden the hearts of those who persist in hardening their hearts against the truth.

Because Pharaoh hardened his heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34; 1 Sam. 6:6), God hardened Pharaoh's heart, fixing him in a path from which he could never return (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8).

In Isaiah 6:9–10, a passage quoted repeatedly in the New Testament (Matt. 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26–27; Rom. 11:8), God said to Isaiah, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive;

⁷ John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002). 284.

keep on looking, but do not understand.’ Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.”

God told Isaiah that He would sovereignly prevent hard-hearted rejecters of the truth from responding to his preaching.

In the same way, Jesus spoke in parables not only to reveal spiritual truth to believers but also to conceal it in judgment on unbelievers (Matt. 13:11–13; Luke 8:10).

There is coming a day that those who persistently reject the truth will be unable to believe it; God will harden their hearts and fix them in the path they have chosen.⁸

⁸ John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002). 284.

This is the conclusion Paul makes in verses 11-12.

He says, “For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

CONCLUSION

What a sobering conclusion to this section.

Here is the definite judicial act of God (Milligan) who gives the wicked over to the evil which they have deliberately chosen (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

A working of error (ἐνεργειαν πλανης [*energeian planēs*]).

Terrible result of willful rejection of the truth of God. ⁹

During the day of the Lord's wrath, we're told that after the blowing of the sixth trumpet, "a third of mankind" will be killed (Rev.9:15) but "the rest of mankind were not killed by these plagues, *did not repent* of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they *did not repent* of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts" (vv.20-21).

And why did God send "a deluding influence so that they [would] believe [the] lie"?

Because they would not repent!

⁹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997). 2 Th 2:11.

The only way to escape the coming wrath is to repent of your sin and place your trust fully in Jesus who took the penalty your sin deserves.

Have you turned to Jesus?

In Matthew 3 when John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness of Judea a message of repentance, all of Jerusalem was going out to hear him.

And those who repented were baptized “as they confessed their sins” (v.6).

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you *to flee from the wrath to come?* “*Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance.*”

That is the only way we can escape the coming day of the Lord's wrath.

If you haven't embraced Jesus, do so now before it's too late.

Let's pray.

LIFE APPLICATION

What is repentance?

Do you talk to others about God's coming judgment? If yes, how? If no, why not?

How do you reveal your love for the truth?