

Are We Nearing that Day?

2 Thessalonians 2: 1-7

A few years ago, we studied the book of Revelation on Wednesday nights. Much of what we studied dealt with the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ. We learned a lot concerning the Tribulation and Second Coming, but what do we know about the time prior to these events?

It seems to be a topic that is increasingly on the minds of people. As I visit and talk with folks, the end times continues to come up in conversation. I am often asked if I think we are nearing that day. I don't claim to have all the answers, but I believe we are rapidly approaching that day. I believe it is so near that we ought to live each waking moment in anticipation of the trumpet. I have no problem with the notion that some of us here today could witness the rapture of the church.

The verses we've read give insight to the time prior to the Lord's return. I want to consider the question: [Are We Nearing that Day?](#) I hope that the [truths](#) Paul shared with the Thessalonians will help us better understand the mystery of the Lord's return and challenge us to serve Him in these last days. First of all Paul gives:

I. A Warning Against Deception ([1-2](#)) – Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by our gathering together unto him,* ^[2] 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. It is important to understand that the church at Thessalonica dealt with false doctrine and apostates who taught heresy and sought to destroy the church. The issue at hand was influenced by those teachers of false doctrine. The end times are shrouded in mystery even today. So it is important that we guard against deception. Let's consider a couple of things about their deception.

A. The Turmoil of Deception – It appears the believers at Thessalonica were concerned that they had missed the boat, that somehow the Lord had already returned and they had missed it all. It is clear that Paul sensed they were troubled because of the false teachings.

- We might criticize their ignorance, but I'm sure they were fearful if they thought they had missed out on the promises of God. Many of the problems we face today are a result of deception and doubt. It seems within our nature to worry about those things we don't understand. I don't know exactly how all this will come to pass, but I am confident in my Lord and secure in my salvation.

- Keep in mind, deception is a tool of the devil. He likes to work in our hearts and plant seeds of doubt and deception. He is first described in Scripture as one who is subtle, deceiving Eve to believe a lie and doubt the word of God. I'm glad I don't have to worry about my salvation or whether my Lord will keep me in eternity as He promised. **John 6:37 – All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.** You believed Jesus has the power to save, why not let go of the doubt and believe He has the power to keep you? If Satan can cause you to doubt, he has succeeded in defeating you spiritually. Believe and trust the Lord!

B. The Tactics of Deception – **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.** Paul knew they were troubled, but their fears had no biblical basis. He warned them of being influenced by the false spirit or teachings of a charismatic preacher. He warned of failing to look at the context of Scripture. It is easy to build any type of doctrine we wish if we take verses out of context. The Bible says that Judas went out and hanged himself. In another text, totally unrelated, Jesus said, "**Go and do thou likewise.**" Does this reveal that our Lord supports suicide? Certainly not, we must allow the Bible to speak for itself and keep it in its context!

- Apparently those apostates had found something that troubled the hearts of the believers, but it was unfounded in the Word of God. I am confident, if the Bible says it, then it is true and absolute. If the Bible has nothing to say in regard to an issue, then we have no grounds to assume anything. We must be wise to the tactics of the adversary. He is always looking for ways to deceive and lead people astray.
- This is being done by the many false teachers and cults today. Many have made some outrageous claims. In 1899, the Jehovah's Witnesses' predicted that Armageddon would take place in 1914 with the coming of the Lord. Well 1914 came and went, but the Lord didn't come. They then claimed 1925 would mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old. As you can imagine in 1926 they were embarrassed again and no more claims were made for specific dates. Today, the claim is that Jesus really did return in 1914, but His return was invisible and only the elect were aware of it. Show me that in the Bible! **Rev.1:7 – Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.** **1 John 3:2 – Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.**
- There have always been those who have made their claims. Some thought it would happen in the year 2,000: 4,000 years prior to Christ, 2,000 since. **2 Pet.3:8 – 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.** They believed in 6 days since creation and the 7th day at rest with God.

- There are all kinds of predictions concerning the rebirth of Israel in 1948. I know Israel plays a key role in the end times, but there is no mathematical formula we can use from 1948 to predict the Lord's return. I have heard those who claim the Bible says 100 years after the restoration of Israel. What do all of these do with the words of Jesus? **Mark 13:32 – But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.** Don't live in fear and doubt concerning His return; live in wondrous anticipation of that day! We don't know the day or the hour, but the Bible does reveal the climate of that day.

II. A Word About the Dispensation (3-7) – Paul wanted them to realize they hadn't missed the Lord, but there were some things they could look for that would point to that day. I am leery of the doomsday prophets, but we can learn what to look for from the Word of God. Notice:

A. That Day is Determined (1; 3a) – Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, ^[3] Let no man deceive you by any means: He begins this chapter with a reminder that Jesus would come and we would be gathered unto Him. These verses are dealing with the Second Coming, not the rapture of the church. I hope you know there is a difference, **1 Thes.4:13-18** deal with the rapture and **1 Thes.5:1-11** deal with the second coming. (Illus. we will be with Jesus)

- They were not to be deceived by the sleight of men, **v.3a**. The Lord has determined when that great and dreadful day will be as He comes to judge the sinful of this world. The prophecies of the first advent of Christ were fulfilled to the letter and so shall His second coming be. The Lord has set that moment in time and it will come to pass just as He has planned. Satan and the men of this earth will be unable to stop the Lord's return.

B. That Day is Described (3b-4) – *for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;* ^[4] 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. That great day will not happen until all things are fulfilled according to God's plan. The earth will experience:

1. The Apostasy of Men – *For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.* Before the Lord returns there must be a falling away of humanity from the ways of God. If you are looking for things that point to the soon return of Christ, this is coming to pass in our day. I have never read or known of a time where men live as they do today. There have always been evil influences and gross sin, but we are living in a day of absolute, wholesale sin around the world. America was

founded on the Bible and Christian principles and yet we are abandoning the truth of God and His will for our lives.

- According to the website city-data.com, in 2012, Mount Airy reported that 50.7% of the city population claimed some sort of religious affiliation. This reveals that 49.3% of the residents in Mount Airy are un-churched. Many have never even been to a church service. We are not talking about a metropolitan area in the Northeast; this is a rural area of the Bible belt. I think we can say without a doubt that we are seeing a great falling away. If there has ever been a time when God's people need to live for the Lord and anticipate His coming, it is now! Things are not going to get any better; they will only wax worse and worse prior to the Lord's return.

2. The Appearance of Antichrist (3b-4) – *for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;* ^[4] *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.* The Lord will not come to judge the earth and establish His kingdom until the son of perdition, the antichrist, comes on the scene. I believe we are seeing the stage being set for his rise to power right now. He will oppose all that is godly.

- We live in a day of rebellion and total disregard for truth and righteousness. The religions of the world claim there is really no difference in us; we are all going to get to our desired paradise, just in different ways. The stage is being set for a one world religion and a one world government. Technology is being produced that can implement a tiny microchip under the skin, storing all our personal data. A key event in the Tribulation is the Abomination of Desolation spoken of in [Dan.9:27; 12:11](#). There are preparations being made right now to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The antichrist will make a deal to secure the peace of Jerusalem and then after 3 ½ years betray the deal and set himself on the altar of the Temple to be worshipped as God. The Israeli-Palestinian peace accord is the goal of many world leaders in our day. The stage is being set for the end times.

C. That Day is Directed (6-7) – *And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.* ^[7] *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.* The Holy Spirit of God is serving as a restrainer against Satan and his evil desires. The Spirit will prevent the Antichrist from taking power until his appointed time. That is not to say that we are not already feeling his demonic influence, [7a](#). The spirit of antichrist was already present in the days of the early church. [1 John 4:3-](#) *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

- The rapture of the church will precede the return of Christ. V. 7b – only he who now letteth *will let, until he be taken out of the way*. We are indwelt by the Spirit and are a mighty influence in this world. Never underestimate what the church can accomplish through the power of God. When the church is gone and the Spirit no longer dwells on earth as He does now, the antichrist will appear. When the Restrainer is taken away, the antichrist will come, ushering in the Tribulation which will end with the return of Christ. All of this reveals that we serve a sovereign God who is in control. Satan has power, but his power is limited only to what God allows. The great day of the Lord is set and it is sure!

Conclusion: I trust these verses have enlightened us to what will transpire prior to the Lord's return. I have no idea when that day will be, but I am expecting His call for the church at any moment. We have heard from God's Word how things must come to pass and we are seeing prophecy fulfilled with each passing day. My question is: Are you ready should the Lord call for the church? Christian can you sense the urgency to work while there is still time? I believe we are nearing that day!