

## The Return of the King: Lesson 4

### 2 Thessalonians 2:5-17

#### Verse 5

*Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

The Apostle Paul had started this church in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4) and had **taught** them about the second coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

#### Verses 6-7

*And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.*

Lawlessness is of course alive and well in the world. There is something holding this lawlessness down.

- 1) The cessation of the restrainer- The Thessalonians **knew** who the restrainer was but Paul does not tell us.

There has been much debate about who this restrainer is; the Roman government, laws, the nation of Israel, Christians binding Satan.

I believe the restrainer is the **Holy Spirit** and he is not removed from the world, rather the cessation of his **restraining** work.

#### Verse 8

*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.*

The lawless one (antichrist), he will be revealed at the beginning of the Tribulation (7 years) (Daniel 9:27). He, at first will have a limited rule in the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation but in the **last half**, he will rule the world. Just as his revealing will be on God's timetable so will be his end (Daniel 7:26, 11:45; Revelation 19:20).

Breath of his mouth- This statement comes from the **Old Testament** (Isaiah 11:4, 30:33; Hosea 6:5).

Bring to nothing- means "to make **inoperable** or render ineffective". Not only will the antichrist be destroyed so will his **kingdom** (Revelation 19:11-21).

## Verse 9

*The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,*

The lawless one will be **empowered** by Satan (Revelation 13:2). He will demonstrate supernatural power.

*And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. **Revelation 13:2***

Paul uses three different words to describe them:

- 1) Miracles- This word means “the power that works wonders” or “the power **behind** the works”.
- 2) Signs- refers to the fact that they will have **significance**.
- 3) Wonders- indicates the **awe** that people will have for them.

## Verses 10-12

*and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

For those who perish- This deception will take hold in those who **reject** Christ. In other words, they allowed themselves to be deluded, which was their sin, and God sends the strong delusion which will **seal** their fate. It is their punishment.

The Apostle Paul had taught the Thessalonians these very **important** facts. The rapture had not happened. The restrainer had not stopped restraining, the lawless one had not been **revealed**, and the great **apostasy** had not occurred. The Thessalonians were **not** in the day of the Lord.

In the next few verses Paul first thanks God for saving the Thessalonians.

## Verses 13-14

*But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

A few keywords in these verses:

- Beloved- This is the basis for their election in salvation. It is out of the Lord's **love** and grace that he has called them, and us, to himself.

- Chose- This word refers to the selection of someone for a purpose. Here they are to be the first fruits- to be saved in this area, others would be saved but they were the **first**, and Paul celebrates this.
- Through sanctification by the Spirit- The Thessalonians were set apart by the Holy Spirit for not only salvation but also **set apart** from unrighteousness to purity and blamelessness (1 Corinthians 6:11).
- Calling of God- Indicates God summoning his people to salvation and sanctification (2 Timothy 1:9). God used the good news of Jesus Christ crucified and risen to call them to **salvation** before the foundation of the world and their belief in the truth of the gospel.

### **Verse 15**

*So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.*

Paul is telling them, based on what he has taught them to **stand firm**. Stand firm on God's Word delivered both by the authoritative word of the Apostles and the letters they have received from the Apostles.

- Traditions- We know that traditions can at times be dangerous (Matthew 15:2-3; Colossians 2:8). What Paul has in mind is the Apostolic Traditions **preserved** for us in the New Testament.

### **Verses 16-17**

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, 17comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.*

Two things we see in these verses:

1. In offering prayer to both God the Father and the Lord Jesus, Paul shows us they are distinct persons but **equal** in authority and attributes.
2. Paul asks that God would comfort them as they go through **persecution**. This endurance and comfort are to show up in spiritual fruit.