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Faith Bible Church
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-53
2 Thessalonians 2: The Antichrist.1

Read 2 Thessalonians 2: *“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who 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. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And 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; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 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. 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”*

We have noted three broad areas of truth in 1 and 2 Thessalonians: 1) the introduction of Paul’s assessment of believers’ spiritual lives, 2) biblical doctrines related to eschatology, and 3) final exhortations to believers to develop and advance in spiritual virtue. The eschatology we have touched on in 1 Thessalonians was primarily concerning the Rapture. The eschatology we are looking at in 2 Thessalonians is about events of the Tribulation and Second Advent. At the Rapture Christ comes in grace for His own, but at the Second Advent Christ comes to judge unbelievers along with Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet.

Human history is headed for a time when the world *in masse* will worship Satan; read Rev. 13:8. This will only be possible when people no longer believe in the God of the Bible—biblical Realism. Instead, they will believe in a god of their own making. Such is already the case throughout the world and even in much of contemporary Christianity as prophesied by Paul; read 2 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:3-4. When mankind worships Satan (now or in the Tribulation) he often does so unwittingly in that he actually thinks he is worshipping God, but he is deceived about the

nature of God. This deception takes place because of the “mystery of iniquity” and because he does not love the truth; see 2 Thess. 2:4 and 2:1-11. Worship of Satan will be especially pronounced during the Tribulation through the “ministries” of the Antichrist/Beast of the Gentiles and the False Prophet of Israel. Let’s note a few biblical descriptions of this Antichrist.

First, God tells us that while there is only one Antichrist/Beast in the Tribulation who will direct worship to Satan/dragon (read Rev. 13:3-6), there are many antichrists throughout history; read 1 John 2:18. Satan is always preparing men to become his Antichrist in anticipation for what follows the Rapture, when the Holy Spirit’s influences will be removed from the earth as believers who are all indwelt with the Holy Spirit will be removed/raptured; read 2 Thess. 2:6. The objective of all antichrists is always to remove biblical realism, for it is the only way anyone can be deceived into worshipping Satan instead of the true God. It is not enough to hold to a literal view of Scripture, one must understand its objective truths in the context of whole truth and Realism. There are many Bible believers who hold to pagan and heretical views of God because they take the Bible literally without understanding philosophical Realism. One of the best examples of this is the Finis Dake Study Bible, which is popular among many Charismatics and which takes anthropomorphic descriptions of God as literally true. Many Christians are not taught the foundations of Realism such as logic and philosophy of language. Many just trust their “spiritual” feelings. As they become increasingly anti-intellectual, they increasingly lose the ability to think for themselves about God and the Word of God. They become sitting ducks for the coming great deception. Even in good Bible teaching circles, many doctrines have been neglected and distorted because the believers were not taught Realism. One of the results is that Christianity is morphed into simply being about the devotional or spiritual life. We also see this in seminaries where ‘Theology’ departments have been renamed ‘Religion’ departments as the focus shifts from Truth and God emphases to human existential religious focus—how man feels and chooses to believe about God. Instead of teaching about God and Reality, the departments have become about how man feels about God—i.e., what works for the *existential* spiritual life.

Second, the Antichrist will be religious. He will be no atheist. He will *not* be espousing a philosophy of naturalism/scientism. 2 Thessalonian 2:9 tells us that he will come in the supernatural *activity of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders*. Throughout human history Satan has always been the author and promoter of false religious philosophies—from the gods of the Canaanites to those of the Greeks. We can even see Satan’s influence in Cain, who was involved in “worship,” but it was false human works worship instigated by Satan himself. Satan has always been a deeply religious person. However, his religion is about the worship of self instead of God. Satan is behind all of the false religious systems around the world, not only in tribal animism and fetishism, but in the modern monotheistic systems such as Islam and modern Judaism and much of contemporary apostate Christianity. His religious nature and activity is prophesied in Daniel 11:36-39, which tells us that he will exalt and magnify himself above every ___ and will speak monstrous things against the __ of gods and he will show no regard for the ___ of his fathers, and he will honor a __ of fortress with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures; then he will cause the new god to ”r _ e over many.” This deception always results from suppression of truth; read Romans 1:18-25: *they exchanged the truth of God for a*

____.

Third, our 2 Thessalonian passage tells us that the spirit of Antichrist **is already at work**. This means that Satanic inspired worship already exists around the world not only in the false religious systems, but in Christianity in the last days; read 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:4: *“they will turn away their ears from ___ and will turn aside to ___.”* One of the most common ways the truth of God

is suppressed in churches today is in sermons which aim at making believers feel better about themselves and the nature of God rather than growing them in the whole truth on the complete nature of God. The central problem for man throughout history is his attempt to make God in his own image, one that makes him feel more comfortable. This “mystery of iniquity is already at work” and is even visible for all to see on popular “Christian TV.” The demonic activity among prominent Charismatic leaders has been well-established and is well understood by Christian philosophers and discerning doctrinal believers.

Fourth, a major goal of the Antichrist is to rid the earth of true biblical faith. While he is temporarily held back now by the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit during the Church Age, his violent assault on all believers in the Tribulation will be unprecedented. During the Church Age, his attempts to remove biblical faith are always in the realm of getting believers to accept unbiblical philosophies. Through his anti-realism forms of philosophy, he effectively is able to move believers outside of the Realism of the Bible and place them in some type of anti-realistic philosophy: e.g., superstition, deism, nominalism, Platonism, fideism, or even Mammonism (where Christian faith is compartmentalized away). Satan does not care if he captures believers through superstition or materialism. He knows full well that all he has to do to eviscerate the supernatural faith, hope, and love that God bestows on positive believers is to get them to live for the world instead of God and His truth; read and think about 2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 6:9-10; Matt. 6:19-24. These anti-realistic philosophies are demonic and render the believer incapable of loving and living in the Word of God on a regular basis because the Word is suppressed by some “greater good” in the kosmos as indicated by the *believer constantly being preoccupied with the details of life* and never *taking time* to think and mediate on the ultimate Truths of Realism and Life. Life becomes just about the daily grind, all in the face of a God who has so much more for every believer who will seek Him above all.

Jeremiah 29:13 'And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

*In 'Ehyeh,
Pastor Don Hargrove*