

# The coming of the lawless one

Preached Sunday, 11/8/20

## Introduction

### How I got there

- The text I want to share was our reading October 14
- The Lord began to stir my heart concerning it - so I want to share it with you
- It is a message for the church TODAY

### Text

- The text I want to share is from 2nd Thessalonians
- The church in Thessalonica was founded on Paul's missionary journey - and was immediately persecuted
- Paul was driven from the city after only three weeks
- In 1st Thessalonians he writes to give the believers hope as some had died - but they thought Christ would return before that happened.
- Paul writes about the resurrection - **1 Thess 4:13-14 (NIV)** (13) *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. (14) We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

## The coming of the lawless one

- He describes the trumpet sound - and the dead in Christ raised from the dead
- See **1 Thess 5:2 (NIV)** *(2) for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*
- He wants them to be ready
- They were ready! They quit their jobs and waited for Christ to return!!
- That wasn't Paul's intent, so he writes this letter to instruct them in how to live until He comes
- We are going to share from the opening verses on 2nd Thessalonians 2 - as Paul teaches about **WHAT PRECEDES CHRIST'S RETURN**
- I'm going to step through the text in the NIV and then come back to make application
- **Note:** I'm also going to read a couple verses from Daniel 7 - as Daniel prophesies about this man too

# Exegesis

## Christ hasn't come yet

- **2 Thess 2:1-2 (NIV)** *(1) Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, (2) not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.*
- Believing his return was imminent, apparently the rumor had spread the Christ had already come - and they'd missed it
- Paul writes this passage to spell out what must take place **BEFORE** Christ returns

## A warning about deception

- **2 Thess 2:3** *(3) Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*

## The coming of the lawless one

- See the caution at the start of the 3rd verse *don't let anyone deceive you...*
- The enemy will try to deceive and discourage God's people. We must know and be in the Word!!
- As we expound on this passage - know this - the devil is a liar, and he is going to work on overtime to DECEIVE God's people
- He will do anything to discredit the reality of Christ's return. We must not be unaware

## Point

- Slide
- Paul writes to warn them two things must take place BEFORE Christ returns
- I believe His return is at hand - so we need to be looking for these things

## The rebellion

- Slide
- Paul warns a rebellion will come
- *A great falling away* A great apostasy!
- There will be a time when **believers** turn away from the faith they once knew. It will be "sudden" - as there have been those through history who have fallen away. This will be an event - where Christians will turn en masse from Christ!
- They will reject Him, and the salvation he offers
- This is not something that will happen to unbelievers - they are already "in rebellion". They are already "away" - they cannot fall away.
- This is what I need to warn you about today - there will be a falling away of Believers - turning from the faith they once knew

## Man of lawlessness is revealed

- The leader of this rebellion / apostasy / falling away is called “the man of sin” or the man of lawlessness
- He will turn people’s hearts away from he true faith into following his lie!
- He is the antiChrist - the figure who will rise and lead this world into the final judgment
- He is the *boastful horn* from Daniel
- See **Daniel 7:8 (NIV)** (8) *"While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.*
- This is from Daniels vision of the coming kingdoms
- This final horn, king, ruler was unlike the others - and rose to power speaking boastfully - making war on the saints

## What is lawlessness?

- Sin, rebellion against God
- This man will be the leader of a rebellion against Jesus Christ
- His lies, his actions, his miracles, his power - will deceive people causing them to turn away from the Lord!

## His destiny

- Doomed to destruction the end of v3 tells us
- Like Judas, this man is destined for hell
- This will be reiterated in the remainder of our text - but church: Jesus wins!

## His actions

- See **2 Thess 2:4 (NIV)** (4) *He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*
- He will set himself up as the object of worship, claiming to be the person worthy of worship.
- He will purport to be the one true object of worship
- He will then make war on the true Church (praise God there is always a remnant)
- See **Daniel 7:25** (25) *He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.*
- This will not be an easy time for believers - but we must hold on!
- His deception will fool many!

## Fair warning

- **2 Thess 2:5 (NIV)** (5) *Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?*
- The Spirit, speaking through Paul - had warned them of these things - even through the short time he was there
- **Thought:** God warns us in advance - we must take it to heart. That's what he's stirring up in me right now.
- **Thought** The antidote to deception is the Word!

## Held back at the moment

- **2 Thess 2:6-7 (NIV)** (6) *And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. (7) For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*
- He is currently restrained - held back for the right moment
- The Holy Spirit is keeping the antiChrist in check

## The coming of the lawless one

- Rebellion is already at work - *among the saints* but when he is released then it will have it's full force
- We already see the working of apostasy in the church - but this is just the beginning.
- Saints hold on!

## His release / defeat

- **2 Thess 2:8 (NIV)** (8) *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming*
- When the one holding him back is removed - the lawless one will be revealed
- He will have a time of power on the earth
- He will be defeated when Christ returns!

## His reign

- **2 Thess 2:9-10 (NIV)** *The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, (10) and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

## Power to deceive

- Here we see his “ministry”
- He will have power to deceive and do miracles signs and wonders
- He will be empowered by satan himself
- He will be effective - because people will turn and follow him
- Jesus predicts **Matt 24:24 (NIV)** (24) *For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.*

## The coming of the lawless one

### Those deceived

- They are perishing - on their way to hell
- They refused to love the truth
- **Illustrate:** All the posts, celebrations, etc following the announcement yesterday
- They are “Free” to be loved
- They have chosen to embrace a deception - and they are perishing
- Only one way to be saved - *repent and believe*
- They want to hold on to their sin - and will receive their reward

### The source of the delusion

- **2 Thess 2:11-12 (NIV)** (11) *For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie* (12) *and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*
- This is a difficult passage - but God is the one who allows this deception
- God sends them a delusion - and they will believe the lie
- They have not believed the truth - instead delighting in wickedness - and now they will be condemned
- The end comes when Christ destroys wickedness and judges mankind.
- The coming of the lawless one precedes his return so that the wicked can be judged!

## Application

### God's heart for mankind

- For God so loved

## The coming of the lawless one

- He has sent Jesus for us - offering salvation to us
- **Point** We must choose him. We must believe the truth - not reject it
- Those who reject it will be destroyed
- That is not God's will - but he respects our choice - and each choice has consequences

## Prepare for what's next

- Recognize where we are living
- See the results and rationale for the last election as an example
- Knowing that a rebellion is coming, based on deception
- Get in the word, believe it and live it - regardless of whatever else happens!
- Don't think it couldn't happen to you!

## Know that Christ will win!

- Don't be discouraged
- Jesus wins!