

CALL to PRAYER - Pray that God would keep us from deception – pray for what God promised – Matt. 24:24-25

Intro –This is part 2 of “*Signs Before the Second Coming*”. Our text is in 2 Thess. 2, and it lays two main signs that must happen before Jesus comes back. The Thessalonian church had received word that they had missed the Day of the Lord. They were told by “prophetic word”, sermon & letter that they had been left behind – (2<sup>nd</sup> Coming & believers being gathered together with the Lord (rapture) had already happened) Paul eases their angst by reminding them of his former teaching regarding some future events that must take place first. He lists two main signs. We focused on one last week (Apostasy) and this week we tackle the other (Anti-Christ). Christ will not return until the antichrist has been revealed. This “man of sin” will mimic the ministry of Jesus Christ...just in a wicked way. Our text today highlights some elements of his “ministry”- bold statements at the Temple...miracles...& deception. The practical application for us today is - helps us with speculation about the identity of antichrist & prepares us for a future deception that will engulf society and many within the church (apostasy)

## **2 Thess. 2:1-12 – Signs Before the Second Coming – part 2**

### **REVIEW**

- 2 Thess. 2:1 - subject matter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming & rapture - “our gathering together to Him” (1 Thess. 4:17)
- 2 Thess. 2:2 - church was disturbed because of a teaching about the timing (already happened)
- 2 Thess. 2:3 - don’t be deceived....won’t happen unless/until.... **“the apostasy comes first”**
  - *Apostasy* = falling away. There is coming a great falling away from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1 / Matt. 24:10)
  - It has been said that “*American Evangelicalism is a mile wide and an inch deep.*”  
When the sun comes out and the heat is high...shallow waters quickly evaporate.
    - A vapid faith will evaporate in the difficult day.
    - Shallow decisions aren’t deep enough to withstand deception & difficulty
      - You need full throated and stout hearted disciples
  - An apostasy is around the corner before the coming of our Lord

### **THE MAN OF SIN**

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> big sign given is that the “*man of lawlessness*” must be revealed first.
  - 2 Thess. 2:3 (there are many monikers for this man of sin)
  - *Man of Lawlessness/Son of Destruction/Antichrist/Beast* = synonymous terms
  - I heard a preacher on the radio yesterday say, “*The antichrist won’t appear until we all disappear.*” Well...the Scripture actually says the exact opposite – 2 Thess. 2:3
- There has been much speculation throughout history about the identity of the antichrist.
  - Roman emperors – Nero, Domitian, Marcus Aurelius, Diocletian...
  - 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith names the Pope as antichrist (common for Protestants)
  - POTUS is a popular choice - every president from Reagan to Trump has been suspected (**Biden**)
  - How do we recognize the antichrist if being POTUS is not a prerequisite?
- 1 John 2:18
  - Many throughout time (Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin) but the main one at the end of time.

- How do we recognize him?
  - The antichrist will mimic the ministry of Jesus Christ in an opposite & evil way
    - 3 ½ years.... The way he speaks..... a “resurrection”
    - Statements at the Temple & the working of miracles
- Temple
  - Jesus Christ went boldly into the Temple and made earth shattering statements
    - Mal. 3:1-3 Jesus cleansed Temple twice (bookends of His ministry)
    - Matt. 26:55
  - The antichrist will make himself known by what he does at the Temple
    - 2 Thess. 2:4
    - The antichrist is revealed when he claims to be god in the Temple of God
  - I think this is the “*abomination of desolation*” spoken of by Jesus and Daniel
    - Matt. 24:15 (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) when this happens we are to understand something
  - The antichrist will do the opposite of what Jesus did in the Temple
    - Jesus cleansed it... taught truth in it ....healed people in it (Matt. 21:12-15)
    - Antichrist will desecrate it & tell lies in it & “perform” in it (miracles)
      - The Temple in Jerusalem will be a stage for his blasphemy/sacrilege
  - For these things to happen there must be a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.
    - I look for this on the horizon....it is coming before His coming back
- Reminders and restrainers
  - Paul talked about these things to this church - 2 Thess. 2:5
  - These events & antichrist are being restrained until the proper time - 2 Thess. 2:6-8
    - Restrained.....revealed.....the Lords return (order of operation)
- Miracles
  - 2 Thess. 2:8-9
    - As Jesus was filled with The Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34; Matt. 12:28) – antichrist will be filled with the evil spirit (Satan) without measure (Rev. 13:2b)
  - Miraculous days are ahead
    - Matt. 24:24-25
    - Miracles showed that Jesus was the Christ - John 5:36 John 10:37-38 John 20:30-31
    - Miracles will show that the man of sin is the antichrist - Rev. 13:13-14
- Deception
  - Deception will mark the revelation of the man of sin
    - Matt. 24:4-5, 10-11, 23-26
    - 2 Thess. 2:9-10
  - Deception is God’s judgment upon those who refuse the truth
    - 2 Thess. 2:11-12 (1 Kings 22:23)
    - Jesus has clearly demonstrated that He is the Christ – His life...ministry... miracles... words....death....resurrection
    - Those who refuse to believe The Christ will believe in the antichrist
  - Those who refuse the truth will buy the lie. (Truth is the inoculation for deception)
    - John 14:6 John 18:37 Prov. 17:4 John 8:45