

LSB 2 Thessalonians 2:5 - 12 THE antichrist the restrainer and the delusion

*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 will 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 Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming— 9 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of unrighteousness 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 sends upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.*

This is now our 6th Sunday looking at the doctrine of the Antichrist with a capital A. The final one world ruler who, after the church has been raptured out, will draw the entire world into his one world government, one world religion, false whole world peace.

And I am continually surprised as we travel through these inspired words and I study to bring the exposition of these verses at how far we either get, or don't get. I don't have a pre-set plan. There would be no surprise if I did. But I truly believe the Lord has a plan and week by week He reveals the depth of what He we will cover as His Holy Spirit graciously leads me as I study.

Last week we really only looked at 3 verses. 5, 6, and 7. And we finished with the first part of verse 8, almost as a teaser for this week. And just by way of review, in case you missed our study last week, available now on line, we looked at the perfect storm of secularism.

Never before in the history of recorded time since Adam, has there been a

lawlessness in the form that it comes in modern secularism. God is dismissed. There simply IS no God, and therefore, every other law or standard based in revelation from God, both natural revelation and inspired written revelation is no longer absolute truth. Everything, even what is obvious in nature, is now subjective truth. Absolute truth left the room when God was dismissed by modern secularism.

Paul in Romans chapter 1 looks forward to such a time as we have today when he writes in vs. 28;

*28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to an unfit mind, to do those things which are not proper,*

There is a direct correlation between jettisoning God and the resulting malfunction of thinking. Bizarre thinking. Broken irrational thinking from malfunctioning minds. Lose God, lose the capacity to rationalize even the most basic building blocks revealed in nature.

That's where we woke up this morning. And you could argue that this statement has always been true in history from the time Paul wrote it until now, and of course that principal has always been in place.

But I would argue, never at the level we are witnessing right now. Secularism is the single most effective tool ever devised in the pit of hell in order to divorce and dismiss the God of creation.

And I have to say, I think there will be dancing in the streets when the few remaining holdouts, the christians who refuse to let go of the absolute unarguable clear truths of this ancient book, also leave the room. Good riddance. The last vestiges of the sky God from some ancient book written by goat herds with bad teeth. Vanished from the earth. Free at last, free at Last!

Secularism is the perfect stage for which Satan's messiah to be revealed. And the removal of the christians is the final cleansing so the world can move forward into advanced Godless secularism which the bible simply

calls; Lawlessness. Godlessness is lawlessness. Every absolute truth is now subjective truth. We each have our own truth.

So, antichrist enters the stage and miraculously achieves world peace. A peace that solves the crisis that has unfolded of Israel being crushed by her enemies. Invasions from the north, enemies in every direction, hatred by all nations, her old friend the USA perhaps rendered impotent, and a single man miraculously brings peace along with a treaty and protection for Israel, seemingly, out of nowhere. The messiah has arrived.

Messiah with a small m. Remember, they murdered their true messiah 2000 years ago. But they will believe this person, somehow connected with the territory of the original Roman empire, this Roman in some sense, perhaps a future pope of the Roman Catholic church, this miracle worker will be a messiah who can somehow bring Islam and Christendom and Secularism together under a single roof.

A peace, but a very nervous one. A peace based in the singular miraculous charisma of one man who can make iron and clay play nice together. That will be SOME charisma, as we will see in our passage this morning.

*8 And then that lawless one will be revealed—whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming— 9 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

Why does the apostle Paul insert the parenthesis about Jesus slaying antichrist with the breath of His mouth at the second coming?

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say I think the reason the Holy Spirit, through Paul, the inspired author, says those words is because this person seems to the world to be invincible.

And we have several clues for us that might explain the perceived invincibility of this messiah who is antichrist.

In Revelation 13 we read these words;

*1 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain fatally, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth marveled and followed after the beast.*

This man, this antichrist / messiah will be slain and rise up from the dead. A head wound. The idea is expanded in vss. 11 - 14 of the same chapter.

*11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and he was speaking as a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 And he does great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which were given to him to do in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.*

Is it a decapitation? That seems to be popular in the world of Islam. But I want to give you something else, a recent phenomenon that we all witnessed to some extent on TV and the computers. A picture of future lawlessness. An example. And that was ISIS.

Total lawlessness. Like a hoard of locusts that leaves nothing behind in it's wake. Freestyle murdering. Children and women captured and molested. People beheaded. Christians beheaded. Moslems who weren't radicalized according to their gihad, beheaded. Crucifixions all over the place.

It was the first time I heard the term caliphate. Caliphate, the political-

religious state comprising the Muslim community and the lands and peoples under its dominion. And a caliphate has one job. The whole world must become Muslim, or die. The entire world must be in their dominion.

I was packing my bags to leave for heaven. I thought, this is it. Thank goodness we had a man tough enough to give our military the freedoms to do what was necessary to throttle *that* fire.

In the final countdown, the final 1260 days of Jewish history according to Daniel's prophecy, and then additional revelation from Jesus and in the book of Revelation, we understand that there is a sort of unholy trinity in that time frame.

The Beast is the Anti-christ with a capital A. Then there is someone who is called the false prophet. And to complete Satan's version of a trinity, since he never had an original idea, there is the image of the beast.

The reason I was packing for heaven during ISIS and their declaration of a Caliphate is because Islam has an eschatology that parallels biblical eschatology. Except all of our scary bad guys are their heroes.

*The Mahdi (Arabic: الْمَهْدِيّ, romanized: al-Mahdī, lit. 'the Guided') is a messianic figure in Islamic eschatology who is believed to appear at the end of times to rid the world of evil and injustice. He is said to be a descendant of Muhammad who will appear shortly before the prophet 'Īsā (Jesus) and lead Muslims to rule the world.*

That's right out of Wikipedia folks. A messiah who has a prophet, and the prophet is none other than . . . wait for it . . . Jesus.

I think that's how Rome, Europe and the west, the iron toes if you will, is united with Islam the clay. The Mahdi, somehow comes out of a second Roman empire, but Jesus comes down from heaven to some mosque in Syria to be the Mahdi's main man. The messiah and the prophet. The antichrist and the false prophet.

It gives a whole new meaning to Jesus words in the Olivet discourse;

*4 And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. 5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.*

*23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. 24 “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 “Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 “If therefore they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go forth, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them. 27 “For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.*

A delusion is coming for the world that rejected the real Jesus and His true righteousness. In Islamic prophecy, Jesus the prophet is coming, and he does miracles, and he's part of the kingdom of the great messiah, the Mahdi who no one can wage war with. Except it isn't our Jesus. And the real Jesus already said, do not be fooled.

When the real Jesus returns, at His 2nd coming, everyone everywhere on earth will look up and all see Him coming in the sky at the same time. He will slay the Antichrist and the false prophet with the breath of His mouth.

Isaiah 30:33 states; *The breath of Yahweh, like a torrent of brimstone, sets it afire.* Paul includes this parenthesis in his description of antichrist; — *whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming—*

These two humans, the antichrist and the false prophet will be the first persons to inhabit the lake of fire. Jesus will set them on fire with the breath of His mouth and they will be transported to eternity in the lake of fire created for Satan and his angels.

We're in vs. 8 of 2Thess. 2; *8 And then that lawless one will be revealed—whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming— 9 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

The revealing of the antichrist is surrounded by miracles. A fatal wound is healed. And it will be such a fantastic miracle, like a decapitation where the world watches, and the impossibility of the resulting healing, in the power of Satan, will capture the whole world. Who is like the beast!

We watched him die. He came back to life. *9 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders*

This isn't new folks. Jesus was crucified in plain sight. Jesus was dead. Jesus spent 3 days in a tomb. Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Jesus appeared before more than 500 witnesses. Alive. The world already witnessed the only real resurrection.

The world chooses not to believe. Here in a counterfeit death and resurrection, seen by everyone on earth on TV screens, the world will gaze at a counterfeit messiah who is slain and brought back to life, an obvious miracle, and the whole world will believe? Why?

Let me give you some thoughts? To recognize Jesus as God, raised from the dead, requires you to follow Him, to give yourself to Him as absolute Lord and King. That transaction requires repentance from sin, a leaving of this world and it's sin behind.

To recognize antichrist as lord and saviour requires no repentance. No abandonment of sin. In fact the world will have gone mad with sin at that moment in time. No repentance. No turning away from sin. No moral law of God. In fact, making antichrist lord and saviour actually requires you to embrace the madness of depravity and sin.

Weigh that in a scale, and add in the benefit of billions of screens showing

the events unfolding to every person on earth, all at the same time, and see how that comparison works out.

But beyond those comparisons, the true and the counterfeit, there is yet another reality. God gets involved. God elects and calls those who will dwell with Him in righteousness for eternity.

We were dead spiritually, in our sins, when God turned on the spiritual lights and we suddenly believed. Dead people don't suddenly come to life and believe. Ask the mortician. He'll confirm this truth.

God quickens those who will believe the truth about Jesus death and resurrection, in our place. Dead people won't believe, can't believe. They're dead. Spiritually dead. All who believe have this in common; God first quickened their spirits to life, to believe and embrace the truth.

That coin has two sides. The same God who quickened my spirit to believe His Son died in my place, paid the penalty for my sins, transferred His righteousness to my account at the same time my sins were transferred to Jesus to be punished and paid for, Jesus who arose from the dead to prove for all time that the transaction was finished, is also the same God who hardens hearts into disbelief.

People won't believe the clear simple truths about Jesus because they love sin. They weigh in the balance the love of sin as opposed to any love of righteousness, and they choose sin.

Paul tells us something shocking in these verses. Antichrist comes onto the scene surrounded by miracles. It's like cake and eat it too for the world who hates a righteous God and loves unrighteousness and sin. This guy's got everything, and you get to not only keep your sin, you can dive into the depths of sin. The viler the better!

And according to islam, it's jesus, come back from heaven, who brings all the miracles. We knew that old Jesus of the Bible wasn't the real jesus.



This Jesus not only brings miracles, he digs sin. You can sin all you want!

Beloved, I've said it before and will continue to say it. Miracles ceased with the completion of the Word of God in the apostolic era, the first century of the church age. Miracle and sign gifts, and signs pointing to the true Messiah ceased. The church fathers tell us they ceased. And they remained in cessation until now.

Except something happened at the beginning of the last century. In Los Angeles in 1906, the long silence of cessation of sign gifts suddenly ended in a revival that saw miracles, healings, speaking in tongues and prophecies return to Christendom for the first time in 1,800 years.

Then in 1960, also in Los Angeles, miracles broke through denominational boundaries and spread to all different kinds of believers, not just pentacostal folk. The miracles aren't scriptural, but no matter, we can set scripture aside for false miracles.

The next time you see miracles in the Word of God, after the apostles, is the revelation of the Antichrist. How foolish and dangerous for so-called evangelical Christianity, and factions of the church, to be toying with counterfeit signs and miracles when the next time the Bible recognizes miracles after the apostles, is when Antichrist is revealed. Utter dangerous foolishness. Beware.

Counterfeit miracles have a source which is revealed to us in vs. 9.

*9 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders*

Not only are the foolish miracles of the current flock of faith healers paving the way for Antichrist's revealing, those miracles supposedly ascribed to Jesus will look wimpy compared to the ones the devil will bring. The delusional Luke Warm Church is ripe for the delusions the devil will bring. And God will help. Shocking but true.

*9 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders 10 and with all the deception of unrighteousness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

This will be a time of utter deception. God is removed by secularism. The old sky God is dead. Gone. Killed by modern secularism. Except one thing we've not considered in all of this secular freedom to be your own god and do your own truth.

God created within us souls that quest for the spiritual. Walk up and down main street and ask every godless person if they are spiritual, and 100% of them will tell you. Oh, I'm very spiritual. Not in the old way, I don't believe in the christian God but I'm very spiritual.

Secular creates lawlessness of no God. But secularism is a vacuum, and into that vacuum walks a very spiritual charismatic man. The Mahdi. Somehow connected to Rome. And Isa, the moslem jesus comes back from heaven to some mosque in Syria. And these guys are SPIRITUAL! They can do miracles. And they embrace and expand the sin we all love. What a combination.

Some years ago I had an immediate supervisor who I really enjoyed as a person. And we would talk about these things. He wasn't a believer, still isn't, but he would say, when I see all these things happening, the christians disappear, and wars and earthquakes and birthpangs, then I'll believe.

No, he won't. And here's why;

*10 and with all the deception of unrighteousness 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 sends upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,*

People who have heard the truth, understood the truth, but made a choice to not receive the truth because they loved their sin and did not love

righteousness, will perish. How can they reject all of the evidence unfolding prophetically just as the old book said it would?

God Himself will *send upon them a deluding influence . . . SO THAT . . . they will believe what is false*. I mean, some christian spells it all out, the church will be raptured. the real believers will leave en-mass, all gone on the same day at the same time, just like the christians said.

How do you get from that to following a false messiah?? It all happened just like the christians told you it would. Now what. You understood what the christians were saying. You understood that to be a christian like the guy delivering the message had a component to it that Jesus was Lord and you somehow need to be willing turn away from whatever sin you love and follow Jesus.

You understood that and chose sin. You understood the truth but you didn't love the truth. You loved sin. But when you see the events unfold, then you'll know it's time to get with the program and follow Jesus. No.

But wait. Some guy who claims to be the messiah was dead, a fatal head wound of some kind, maybe even a decapitation, we don't really know, but that guy came back to life and jesus is with him and they're doing miracles galore and all that old stuff about sin is rejected by this messiah, you can sin all you want, anything you want. It's too good to pass up.

There used to be a faction of weird theory type people who believed John F Kennedy is hidden in a room some place and will come back to life as the antichrist. That's about as weird as it gets. But the picture of a fatal head wound may be a type. Imagine JFK pronounced dead and we all know he's dead, and then he comes back to life. Something like that. Makes the faith healer stuff look idiotic and wimpy.

The miracles that Satan will be allowed to do will be real, and a profound delusion will descend on those who will perish. A deluding influence.

*12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.*

This is pretty heavy stuff. God deluding people. God Himself sending a deluding influence. Who can withstand God??

What comes first here, the chicken or the egg. Paul makes it pretty clear that this God sent delusion is based in choice. Based in the will.

The main reason people reject the truth isn't because it's unbelievable. Jesus died. He was buried in a tomb for 3 days. He arose from the grave. 2 or three witnesses is all the old testament law required to verify truth even in a capital punishment case.

Jesus appeared alive before over 500 witnesses. To reject that is not because it isn't believable, it's because you weighed righteousness and sin in the balance and chose the pleasures of sin.

There's no escape hatch. People will say, "When I see the rapture happen and the christians gone I'm going to say, uh oh, looks like I'm in for some hard times, it's the tribulation, but now I'll believe and Jesus will have me."

*Mtthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven may be compared to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. 5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 And later the other*

*virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know the day nor the hour.*

Those who choose the Saviour, know the Saviour intimately and personally. He gives to every believer His indwelling Holy Spirit who lives with us, in our hearts, a day to day constant friend and presence who is also our downpayment, our betrothal ring, our promise of so much more we will inherit on the day we see the bridegroom with our own eyes.

Let the sin go. It isn't really fulfilling. Choose Jesus who will live inside your heart as Saviour and Lord, a constant encourager and friend who will transport you out of this world and make you, even now, as we remain here, a citizen of another world. His world.

People who have all the information at their fingertips, but choose to continue in sin will follow a false messiah in a delusion so perfect that Jesus said, 24 *"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.*

Mt. 24:24

In that time frame, if you are God's elect and the delusion doesn't capture you, it won't cost you your love of sin, like before the rapture, to believe, it will cost you your head to believe.

The antichrist will be able to combine all of the world's false religions into a single political rule, islam and roman catholicism and non saved so called christians left behind at the rapture and all of the other cults and isms and spasms will become a melting pot religion who combine like iron and clay as best they can under this person's one world rule.

Jews who cannot combine in that will have a treaty with him. But then half way through the 7 years this person along with his prophet will tire of the constant friction of the leftovers of false religions and he will declare himself as god. That settles it once and for all.

Previous gods of previous religions all gone. He will declare himself god. Anyone who says otherwise, off with their heads. Literally. That's why Jesus in Matthew 24 tells the jews who will see that in the temple it's time to run for you very life.

And God's elect, and there will be thousands of thousands of people who believe this book and recognize the real Jesus was the actual Messiah and are actually saved during this time frame, the antichrist will purge the world of real christians that keep popping up everywhere, by removing their heads.

No wonder the Thessalonian christians were upset and disturbed when someone comes along and claims that they missed the departure, the rapture, and we are actually living in the Day of the Lord.

Paul had given them enough information about that time frame that they were frightened by this false teaching. It will be a terrifying time for true saints of God. Heads will roll. Literally. Paul told them, it can't happen until after the church departs, and antichrist is revealed.

Meanwhile, we are to be informed watchers as secularism begins to punish anyone who refuses to give up the absolute authority of the words of an ancient book. The more we know, the more we long to see His face. Come Lord Jesus.