

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Second Coming Letters of Paul – Part 18

II Thessalonians – Part 5

I. Exposition of Chapter Two (continued).

A. Verse 9 - “The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,”

1. “...according to the working of Satan...” – The word “working” is the Greek word *energeia*. “This word is most often used in the New Testament to denote supernatural powers, whether godly or demonic.”¹ This verse is saying that the Antichrist will operate with the supernatural power of Satan.
 - a. “Satan” – This is used as a personal name which means, “adversary”. William Mounce states; “In the NT ‘Satan’ is a personal name for this diabolical creature, while ‘the devil’ is more like a title.”² “Devil” means; “slanderer” and “accuser.”³
2. “...with all power, signs and lying wonders” – The word “lying” means; “the content of a false utterance—‘lie, falsehood.’”⁴ (e.g. Exodus 7:11, 22, 8:7, 18; Acts 8:9-10.) Dr. Thomas Constable comments on this verse:

“His career will be empowered by Satan (cf. Rev. 13:2b) and characterized by Satan’s method: counterfeiting. Satan’s desire to counterfeit God’s miracles in the world can be traced from Genesis through Revelation. Paul employed three terms to describe the supernatural power this man will demonstrate. Miracles (*dynamei*) emphasizes the inherent power behind the works he will perform. Signs (*sēmeiois*) refers to the fact that they will have significance. Wonders (*terasim*) indicates the attitude of awe that they will evoke when people behold them. He will, in short, perform such powerful miracles that it will be evident to all that he has supernatural power, and people will stand in awe of him.

One such miracle and the people’s awe are mentioned in Revelation 13:2b–4 and 17:8.”⁵

B. Verse 10 – “...and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

1. “...unrighteous deception among those who perish...” – Those who “perish” is referring to the unbeliever. The word means; “to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin.”⁶ (cf. John 3:16). The Bible makes it clear that Satan, the “god of this world”, has “blinded the minds” of those who are not saved. (II Corinthians 4:3-4).
2. “...they did not receive the love of the truth...” – The primary meaning of this is they didn’t receive the truth of the Gospel in order “...that they might be saved.” As believers, our “love of the truth” needs to continue. It seems that many who have loved the truth of the Gospel in terms of being initially saved, do not continue to love the truth of God’s Word if they don’t like what it says. This, no doubt, will lead to believers being deceived in these last days. We must be willing to adjust what we believe if we see clearly that the Word of God says something different, whether we like what it says or not.

C. Verses 11-12 – “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

1. Verse 11 - “...for this reason God will send the strong delusion...” – What is the reason? Because they did not receive a “love of the truth.” The word “strong” here is the same Greek word used in verse 9, *energeia*, which again, means; “supernatural power”, in this case, God’s. The word “delusion” means; “to cause to wander off the path,”⁷ The idea seems to be that because the unbelievers have chosen to reject a love for the truth, God will send judgment in the form of more delusion. Leon Morris states:

“...God uses the evil consequences of sin in his punishment of the sinner. These consequences are not simply the result of the operation of an impersonal process; Paul can say that God gave people up to the consequences of their sin (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; cf. 11:8). God’s hand is in the process whereby the sinner receives the fitting recompense of sin.”⁸

¹Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, William D. Mounce, Gen. ed. (Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, 2006.), 806.

²Ibid., 612.

³Ibid., 179.

⁴Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 416.

⁵Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 720.

⁶Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

⁷Louw and Nida, 364–366.

⁸Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Volume 13: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984.)

2. Verse 12 – “...that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” – Those who choose to “believe the lie” (v. 11) instead of “believe the truth” (v. 12) will be condemned. The word “condemned” means; “to judge a person to be guilty and liable to punishment”⁹ (cf. John 3:17-18). Note the phrase, “...but had pleasure in unrighteousness” – Many times people reject a love for the truth because they don’t want to give up the pleasures of sin. They would rather believe a lie in order to hang onto to their sin. Lee Strobel states:

“I was more than happy to latch onto Darwinism as an excuse to jettison the idea of God so I could unabashedly pursue my own agenda in life without moral constraints.”¹⁰

D. Verse 13 – “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,”

1. This is the second time Paul gives thanks to God for them in this epistle – cf. 1:3.
2. “...because God from the beginning chose you for salvation...” – This is NOT saying that God chose some for salvation and others for damnation! That would be totally contrary to many other Scriptures (e.g. II Peter 3:9). This is simply saying that “...from the beginning...” (or, from the “foundation of the world” – Ephesians 1:4; Revelation 13:8), God chose that “...through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” one would receive salvation.
 - a. “...through sanctification by the Spirit...” – The word “sanctification” means; “pure”, “holy” and “consecrated”¹¹. The moment you believed the truth of the Gospel, which included receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord, you were made holy and pure in your spirit. (cf. I Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; Hebrews 10:5-10.)

E. Verse 14 – “...to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. It was through the preaching of the Gospel, through the apostle Paul, that the Thessalonians heard the call of God to be saved.
2. The total fulfillment of this salvation is when we obtain “...the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”. This is probably a reference back to 1:10-12 when Christ “...may be glorified in you, and you in Him...”. Dr. Bob Utley writes:

“Believers are to be like Christ and at the Second Coming they will share His glory (cf. 1 John 3:2).”¹²

F. Verse 15 – “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”

1. “...stand fast...” – We saw this word before in I Thessalonians 3:8. It means; “to stand firm; to persevere; to persist”¹³ (cf. I Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27; 4:1).
2. “...hold the traditions which you were taught...” – The word “traditions” is defined as: “something deliberately given or handed down over an extended period of time.” Sometimes traditions are spoken of in a negative sense in the New Testament (e.g. Matthew 15:2-6), but they are not always because there are the things handed down by God in His Word. The word “hold” here means exactly that – “hold on to them.”

G. Verses 16-17 - “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

1. In light of all the things previously mentioned concerning the coming of the Lord, our gathering to Him, the falling away and the Antichrist, Paul wants to encourage the believers.
 - a. “...who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation...” – Paul reminds them of God’s love and the fact that His “consolation” is everlasting. This word means; “encouragement”.
 - b. “...and good hope by grace...” – “hope” means; “to look forward with confidence to that which is good”¹⁴
 - c. “...comfort your hearts...”
 - d. “...establish you in every good word and work.” – The word “establish” means; “to cause someone to become stronger in the sense of more firm and unchanging in attitude or belief”¹⁵

⁹Louw and Nida, 555.

¹⁰Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 91

¹¹*Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, William D. Mounce, Gen. ed. (Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, 2006.), 338.

¹²Robert James Utley, *Paul’s First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*, vol. Volume 11, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 137.

¹³Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

¹⁴Louw and Nida, 295.

¹⁵*ibid.*, 677.