

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes April 26, 2006

Guests: David Currie

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- 1: Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him,
- 2: we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited,
 - either by spirit or by word,
 - or by letter purporting to be from us,
 - to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.
- 3: Let no one deceive you in any way;
 - for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first,
 - and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,
- 4: who opposes and exalts himself
 - against every so-called god or object of worship,
 - so that he takes his seat in the temple of God,
 - proclaiming himself to be God.
- 5: Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this?
- 6: And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.
- 7: For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work;
 - only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.
- 8: And then the lawless one will be revealed,
 - and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth
 - and destroy him by his appearing and his coming.
- 9: The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan
 - will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders,
- 10: and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish,
 - because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
- 11: Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion,
 - to make them believe what is false,
- 12: so that all may be condemned
 - who did not believe the truth
 - but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Discussion Notes:

A: Context: Paul's second letter to this small, struggling, yet persevering church.

- Today's passage is great example of why *sola Scriptura* is a dangerous misconception!
 - A VERY difficult verse, in some places indecipherable;
 - Has led to many nuanced, even contradictory conclusions.
 - Therefore, even more important to read within context & Church!
- Opening Context: **2 Thess 1:1-12**

1 & 2: Paul, Silva'nus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalo'nians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Paul bases his praise & plea on their authority as Apostolic leaders; the problem is that there are other leaders undercutting his authority & message.

3 & 4: We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as is fitting, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast of you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which you are enduring.

- In Paul's absence, he is grateful / thankful for their spiritual growth / witness;
 - Their "faith . . . love"
 - Their steadfastness & faith under persecution
 - Their endurance of afflictions.

5: This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering --

- All of this is evidence of God preparing/perfecting them for eternity
- Salvation is not merely a one-time "once saved, always saved" guarantee;
- Salvation is life of faith/love/hope, persevering & growing by grace.

• Paul's description of the separation of the sheep & goats:

*6: since indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
 7: and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted,
 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven
 with his mighty angels in flaming fire,
 8: inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God
 and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
 9: They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction
 and exclusion from the presence of the Lord
 and from the glory of his might,
 10: when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints,
 and to be marveled at in all who have believed,
 because our testimony to you was believed.*

- The "Goats":
 - Those who afflict Christians
 - Those who do not know God
 - Those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus
 - They shall suffer eternal punishment & exclusion . . .

- The "Sheep":
 - Those who are afflicted for their faith
 - Those who believe, love, persevere under persecution.

11 & 12: To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfill every good resolve and work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Intercessory prayer
- The power of God's grace

- Today's passage: 2 Thess 2:1-12 . . . concerning the coming of Christ
- Immediate ending context:

13 & 14: But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of

our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Paul returns to opening expression of gratefulness for their faith / love / perseverance;
- Mystery of God's Calling from the beginning & their sanctification by grace & belief.

15: So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

- **VERY CRUCIAL COMMAND BY PAUL!**

- “So then, brethren . . .” i.e., Therefore; given all of this . . . consequently;
- “Stand firm & hold to the traditions which you were taught by us”
 - Called to remain faithful to the message they received
 - Implies that they can fall away!
- “Either by word of mouth or by letter”
 - The Apostolic Tradition was NOT Sola Scriptura!

B: Today's Primary Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- Question: What event is Paul referring to? The Rapture of the Church?!
- What has initiated this letter? (vs 1-2)
- What is the “rebellion”? (vs 3)
- Who is this “man of lawlessness” . . . “son of perdition” (vs 3)
- What are his key characteristics? (vs 4)
- What is implied in Paul’s reminder that he had told them this all before? (vs 5)
- What is restraining him? (vs 6)
- When will this great battle occur? (vss 7-10)
- What does it mean to “love the truth”? (vs 10)
- What does it mean that God will send upon them a strong delusion? (12)
- What does all this mean for us today? (Since it has been nearly 1950 years since Paul gave this warning and with all those throughout the centuries who have been wrong about the timing of the Second Coming of Christ, what difference can this still make in how we live out our faith?)