

WORTHY OF HIS CALLING

Do Not Be Shaken or Deceived

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Jesus will not return until the great rebellion and the coming of the lawless man (1-12).

- *Do not be shaken or deceived: Jesus will not return until the lawless man comes (1-4).*
 - *The lawless man will lead the great rebellion (3).*
 - *The lawless man will put himself in the place of God (4).*
 - *Regardless of what we see or hear, Christians must believe in the visible return, the physical rapture, and the certain victory of Jesus when he returns (1-2).*
- *Know that the lawless man is the work of Satan to deceive and destroy (5-10).*
 - *While lawlessness exists, it is currently restrained by the mercy of God (5-7).*
 - *When that restraint is lifted, the fullness of lawlessness will be revealed (7-8).*
 - *The purpose of lawlessness is deception and destruction (9-10).*
- *God's conviction of sin, judgment, and righteousness isn't a right but a gift, which doesn't have to be given.*
 - *Don't harden your hearts to the Lord.*
 - *Believe the truth and find pleasure in righteousness!*

Apparently, there were some in the church in Thessalonica who were upset, confused, or even misguided by reports that Jesus had already returned. It's very likely that false teachers had written letters, deceptively putting Paul as the author. Others were likely teaching – perhaps even claiming Paul as the authority – that Jesus had already returned. Because of the persecution in Thessalonica, it's possible that they were arguing that the tribulation they were experiencing was a part of the Great Tribulation in Revelation. Paul wanted to remind them of the truth. He wanted them to build their faith and their lives on the firm foundation of what is true! So Paul reinforced the fact that Jesus will not return until the great rebellion and the coming of the lawless man.

Jesus had not returned because there were things that had not happened, which must precede the coming of the Lord. One of the most significant things was the coming of the lawless man. Therefore, Paul urged the church to not be shaken or deceived because Jesus will not return until the lawless man comes. The lawless man will come to lead a great rebellion against the Lord. The work of lawlessness is unmistakable, as the lawless man will establish himself in the place of God. So for the church, the encouragement is simple: Regardless of what we see or hear, Christians must believe in the visible return, the physical rapture, and the certain victory of Jesus when he returns! Don't be shaken or deceived!

Paul went on to provide some additional details about the work of lawlessness and specifically of the lawless man or the son of perdition. What's most important to know is that the work of lawlessness is the very work of Satan to deceive and destroy. This work of lawlessness already exists in the world. It has ever since the Temptation and the Fall in the Garden of Eden. However, by the mercy of God, the work of lawlessness is now restrained. The gracious convicting work of the Holy Spirit helps to restrain sin in the world; however, when that restraint is lifted, the fullness of lawlessness will be revealed, and the result of that lawlessness is the continued and magnified efforts of the enemy to deceive and destroy.

In God's mercy, he reminds the church of these truths to comfort our hearts and motivate our hands and feet in the work of the mission. Today is the day of salvation, but that day will end. God's conviction of sin, judgment, and righteousness isn't a right but a gift, which doesn't have to be given.

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For those who don't believe and take pleasure in unrighteousness, listen to the call of God! If you feel the conviction of the sin in your soul, don't harden your hearts to the Lord! His grace isn't a right but a gift! Turn to believe the truth and find the lasting and eternal pleasure of righteousness!

1. Read and discuss verses 1-4.
 - a. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies of keywords in these verses.
 - b. What is the primary message or encouragement to believers?
 - c. What are the specific prerequisites before Jesus will return and believers will be raptured (caught up together) with the Lord at this return?
 - d. What are some ways that we see the spirit of lawlessness at work in the world? What are some specific examples of rebellion against the truth and individuals putting themselves in the place of God?
2. Read and discuss verses 5-10.
 - a. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies of keywords in these verses.
 - b. Who is the one restraining the work of lawlessness in the world today? Answer this question with Scripture, using God's Word to help you know who restrains sin.
 - c. Can you imagine if the restraint of sin is taken away? What would happen in this world if that was the case?
 - d. Who is the source of lawlessness? What is the purpose of the work of lawlessness? How are the signs and wonders connected to the source of lawlessness? What makes this so dangerous? How do you see some of this even today?
3. Read and discuss verses 11-12.
 - a. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies of keywords in these verses.
 - b. Do you find these verses terrifying or motivating? Why?
 - c. What do these verses remind us about God's grace and the gift of salvation? How does this impact our focus and work in the mission of the gospel?
 - d. Do you know someone whose heart is hard and who takes pleasure in unrighteousness? Pray for them right now in your group?
 - e. Are you resisting the Lord's convicting work in your heart? What's the danger of hardening your heart?