

Living in the Hope of Glory:
The Message of 2 Thessalonians: #3

Discerning the Day 2 Thess. 2:1-12

--CEFC 7/8/18; 6/20/04

Topic: Eschatology

"I just can't wait until I go on vacation!"

"I can't wait until school starts."

"I can't wait until fall comes"

"I can't wait until Christmas"

"I can't wait until school's out"

"I can't wait until I finish this project at work"

"I can't wait until the kids leave the house"

"I can't wait until I retire"

"I just can't wait...."

What are you waiting for?

What do you look forward to with eager expectation?

What inspires you to press on and persevere when things get tough?

When you read the New Testament,

there is little doubt how the first Christians

would have answered that question--

"Our citizenship is in heaven," Paul writes,

"And we eagerly await a Savior from there,

the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

To the Corinthians, he says,

"you do not lack any spiritual gift

as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed" (1 Cor. 1:7).

To Titus he writes--

"we wait for the blessed hope—

the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior,

Jesus Christ" (2:13).

In the Letter to the Hebrews, we read,

"Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people;

and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin,

but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" Heb. 9:28).

For as John writes in his first epistle--

"Dear children, this is the last hour; ...

we know that when he appears, we shall be like him

for we shall see him as he is" (2:18; 3:2).

Almost the last words of the New Testament

are the words of the risen Jesus,

"I am coming soon!"

which evokes the response,

"So be it. Come Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

One could cite more than 250 references like these in the New Testament.
These Christians were waiting for something--
they were in eager expectation of the coming of their Lord Jesus.

From the beginning, the first Christians proclaimed that
through his resurrection from the dead,
God had declared that this Jesus was both Lord and Christ,
and that he would come again in glory
to gather his people to himself,
to establish his kingdom
and to judge the world.¹

They got this belief from Jesus himself,
who said to them,
**"At that time . . . [all the nations] will see the Son of Man
coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.
And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call,
and they will gather his elect from the four winds,
from one end of the heavens to the other"** (Matt. 24:30,31).

And again, he said,
**"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,
he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.
All the nations will be gathered before him,
and he will separate the people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats"** (Matt. 25:31-32).

Jesus is coming again—this time in great glory. /

I am afraid that many Christians today
don't think much about this glorious truth—
to their own spiritual detriment.
For the gospel message necessarily has a future dimension.

You see, God's saving purpose is not yet complete.
Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead,
but his resurrection is but the first fruits,
the first installment,
the down payment,
of what is still to come.

Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father,
but his authority is not yet recognized by all.
We still live in a fallen world, where sin and evil abound.
We are still plagued by the weakness of our mortal bodies,
and we have not yet been glorified with Christ
in the new heaven and the new earth.

But the gospel declares that there will come a day

¹ Acts 3:13-21; 10:42; 17:31; cf. Matt. 24: 30,31.

when we will be saved by God's power
from even the presence of sin and death,
as we will enter into the glorious presence of our Lord.

The Bible promises us that God's gospel—
his gracious purpose to redeem a people for himself in Jesus Christ—
will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord himself at the end of the age
when Jesus Christ returns to this world in glory.

This hope of the final consummation
of what was begun in Jesus' resurrection from the dead
is essential,
for as one writer put it,
"Faith in Jesus,
faith in his life, and his death,
and his resurrection from the grave,
without the expectation of his [return]
is a cheque that is never cashed,
a promise that is not made in earnest.

A faith in Christ without the expectation of a [return]
is like a flight of stairs that leads nowhere, but ends in the void."²

I remember several years ago when the *Lord of the Rings* movies came out.
I was so disappointed when watching the second movie
to discover that there was to be yet a third.
The second movie left us with no conclusion,
no climax,
no final victory over the evil forces of Mordor,
and I would have to wait a whole year for that glorious ending.

So we ask the question—
Will there ever be a climax, a definitive conclusion, to human history?
Will there ever come a time when the human story
all comes together to make sense?

Who wants to quit reading an epic adventure before you get to the last chapter?
It is that final episode that gives meaning to the whole—
it's what makes the valiant struggle of the hero worthwhile.
It's what gives it a happy ending.

Will justice prevail?
Will good overcome evil?
Will the hero emerge victorious in the end?
These are the questions that the coming of Christ will answer,
and sometimes it is only the hope of the coming of Christ

²Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation: Dogmatics*, vol. 3 (Eng. trans., London: Lutterworth, 1966), p. 396, cited in Stephen H. Travis, *I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 105.

that enables us to hold on to the Lord in the midst of this fallen world.

In this world, we mourn—

but there will come a day when there will be no more mourning.

In this world, we suffer—

but there will come a day when there will be no more suffering.

In this world, the wicked seem to get their way and the righteous are oppressed—

but there will come a day when that will not be so.

a time when justice will finally prevail—

a time when God will show himself

to be perfectly just and good in every way.

There is something deep within the human heart that longs for that

“happily ever after” ending.

Why do we find such satisfaction when so many of our stories end that way.

Is that longing for a happy-ever-after ending just an idle dream,

or is it a glimpse into a deep reality

that God has placed within us

to point us to its ultimate fulfillment in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The coming of Christ in his glory

serves as the culmination of the good purposes of God in the world.

That’s why Paul calls it our “**blessed hope.**”

And Paul’s correspondence with this church in Thessalonica is dominated by this theme.

In his first letter he has a long section in chapters four and five

in which he expounds on this hope.

He talks about those who die before Christ’s coming,

and assures the Thessalonians that they won’t miss out.

When Christ appears in glory,

the dead in Christ will rise first,

then those who are still alive will join them

to go out to meet him,

escorting him to earth as a part of his glorious entourage.

And we all will be with the Lord forever.

In chap. 5 Paul urges them not speculate about the time or date of that coming—

for he will come like a thief in the night—suddenly and unexpectedly.

Although for believers, his coming will not come as a surprise,

for we are children of the light and children of the day.

We are to be spiritually awake at all times—

in eager anticipation of what is to come.

The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him

was a precious truth to the Apostle,

and so it should be for us.

Christ was crucified,

Christ is risen,

Christ is coming again.

But something had happened in the church in Thessalonica
that had led to confusion and disturbance
concerning this central element of Christian faith.

We have to read between the lines to try get at what it might have been
and where it might have come from—
Perhaps somebody stood up in one of their meetings
and claimed to have a word from the Lord,
or maybe somebody had heard second hand
about something that Paul had reportedly said,
or maybe somebody had a letter that they claimed had come from Paul.
We don't know exactly where they got the idea—
but the false notion was circulating among them
that **the day of the Lord had already come.**

Now what exactly did this mean?
What were they thinking?

Some have suggested they may have "spiritualized" the coming of Christ—
claiming that it had already occurred as some heavenly reality.
We do encounter something like that among the Corinthians
and in Ephesus—
In 2 Tim. 2:18, Paul warns Timothy of those "**who have wandered away from the truth.**
They say that the resurrection has already taken place,
and they destroy the faith of some."

A modern version of the view that Christ has already come
is found among the Jehovah's Witnesses.
Their founder, Charles T. Russell,
first taught that the world would end in 1874,
and then revised his calculations to 1914.
After that year passed, his successor J. F. Rutherford
asserted that Christ did in fact come on Oct. 1, 1914, but invisibly.
On that day he exchanged an ordinary seat at the Father's right hand
for the throne of his kingdom.
So no coming of Christ is to be expected, he said;
it has already taken place.³

But the way that Paul responds in vv. 3-8
gives no indication that this is the nature of the error
that he is responding to.

No one can be certain about this,
but I prefer the view that in saying the "**the Day of the Lord has already come,**"
they were not thinking of the precise moment of Christ's return,
but the **series** of events

³ So, Stott.

that would immediately usher in his coming.
That's the only way I can explain why Paul didn't simply say,
"Well, of course, the Day of the Lord hasn't come
because there has been no loud command,
no voice of the archangel with the trumpet call of God,
no glorious appearing of our Lord from heaven
resurrecting the dead in Christ
and gathering his people to himself."
Of course, *that* hasn't happened,
so the "**Day of the Lord**" must be a slightly broader term
than simply the actual "coming" of Christ—
for which the Greek word is παρουσία.

Some among the Thessalonians evidently believed
that this last "**Day of the Lord**" had already dawned,
and that the coming of Christ was to happen immediately,
perhaps within days.⁴
This may explain the problem of idleness that Paul addresses later in chap. 3—
Some people were so certain that the day had arrived
that they had quit working
and were just looking into the sky,
waiting for Christ to come in the clouds.⁵
You can imagine the kind of turmoil that might have created in the church. /

Whatever its exact form, this was the **problem** that Paul addresses in our passage—
Some believers' faith was being shaken
by the false claim that the day of the Lord has already come.
In responding to this situation
I think it's interesting to note that Paul doesn't say,
How could the day of the Lord have possibly come,
because none of you has been raptured out of the world? --
which, at least, casts some doubt, I think,
on the scenario pictured in the *Left Behind* novel series.

Instead, Paul says in v. 3 that the Day of the Lord can't have arrived
because **two things have to happen first**—
a certain event must take place
and a certain person must appear.
"**Don't let anyone deceive you in any way,
for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs
and the man of lawlessness is revealed,
the man doomed to destruction.**"

This is where things start to get interesting!
What *in the world* is Paul talking about?!

As we try to sort this out,

⁴ cf. Marshall.

⁵ Marshall makes this connection as well.

first, I want you to see that Paul is not being original here.
What he says reflects a long tradition of Jewish and Christian thought
about the coming of the Messiah in glory
and what to expect before he comes.

The image often used is that the Messiah's coming is like a **birth**—
the accompanying birth pangs intensify before the Messiah's arrival.
The forces of evil will not endure his coming without a fight.
There will be times of trial and tribulation before the Messiah appears.

The prophet Daniel had a vision of four great beasts
representing various world powers arising out of the sea,
with the fourth one being terrifying and frightening and very powerful,
with ten horns, and one of the horns arising,
full of boastful words,
and persecuting the people of God.
Finally, one like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven
and is given authority and dominion
and a kingdom that will never end (Dan. 7).

In another vision Daniel spoke of a king who would arise
who will do as he pleases,
and who will exalt and magnify himself above every god
and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods (Dn. 11:36).
He would desecrate the temple
and set up the "**abomination that causes desolation**" (11:31).
There would be a time of distress such as not happened
from the beginning of nations until then,
but at that time the people of God will be delivered (Dn. 12:1).

Jesus referred to these same events in his Discourse on the Mount of Olives in Matt. 24.

In the course of history, kings have arisen who were precursors to this final foe—
like the Greek king Antiochus IV
who sacrificed a pig in the Temple in Jerusalem in 168 B.C.
and made the practice of Judaism a capital offense (cf. 1 Macc 1:54-61).
Or there was the Roman Emperor Caligula
who tried to institute emperor worship in Jerusalem in A.D. 40.

But these kings pointed to someone greater, and even more sinister—
if that was possible.

This is the figure commonly known in the epistles of John as **the Anti-Christ**⁶—
for he is the opposite of all that the Christ is.

Look at how Paul describes him—
Instead of being obedient to God, fulfilling the law as Jesus did,

⁶ 1 Jn. 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7.

this figure is called "**the man of lawlessness.**"
He is not bound by any moral or legal standard—
he sets himself up as the one and only authority.

Instead of giving eternal life,
this figure is "**doomed to destruction.**"

Instead of living in perfect union with the good purposes of God,
this figure opposes all that God wants to accomplish.

And instead of humbling himself under the will of God and enduring the cross,
this man *exalts himself* over everything that is called God
and is worshiped.

"he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

Whether this temple is the actual temple in Jerusalem,
or the metaphorical temple of God that is the church,
or is simply a graphic way of speaking of
his grasping for ultimate power and authority,
we can't be sure.

Like the Messiah, he will be "**revealed**",
he will have his own "coming"
(the same word "parousia" is used of him).

He will be the instrument of Satan,
who wants to destroy the work of God,
and he is a master deceiver in the process.

This "**man of lawlessness**" will parody the work of Christ,
using all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders⁷
to lead people down his path,
that wide path,
that leads to destruction. /

This is who is coming, Paul says.

**"Don't you remember that when I was with you,
I used to tell you these things?"**

Paul says in v. 5 of our passage.

And with this "**man of lawlessness**" will come a time of "**rebellion**."

The word used here can refer to political insurrection
as well as religious apostasy—
and probably both are included.

The love of many will grow cold,
people will turn away from the truth,
gathering around them teachers who will tell them
just what they want to hear,
resulting in all manner of immorality.

⁷ cf. Acts 2:22; Mk. 13:22; Rev. 13:13.

This is what you will see, Paul says, before the coming of the day of the Lord.

You may think things are bad now, he says—

and I know you Thessalonians are already enduring persecution and hardship,
for the secret power of lawlessness is already at work in the world, Paul says.

John, in his letters, speaks of anyone who deceives God's people
as having the spirit of that final antichrist.⁸

Yes, you've been treated pretty badly,
but you haven't seen the worst of it—
not by a long shot.

There will come a time when all hell will break loose.

These will be the final birth pangs before the Messiah appears in all his glory.

But it hasn't happened yet.

This man of lawlessness hasn't yet come.

And why not?

Because, says Paul, something, or someone, is holding him back.

v. 6--"And now you know what is holding him back,
so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work;
but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so
till he is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed"

The Thessalonians knew what is holding the "lawless one" back.

They knew, because Paul had told them when he had been with them—
but, unfortunately, he hasn't told us!

And I get the impression that in the providence of God
we weren't meant to know with any certainty,
because, for some reason, Paul seems very allusive in his language here,
almost as if he didn't want to speak openly about it
in a letter that might fall into the wrong hands.

I think it's best to confess our ignorance

about what is holding the man of lawlessness back.

That's what the great theologian Augustine did when he said,

"I admit that the meaning of this completely escapes me."⁹

A more recent commentator has said,

"This passage is probably the most obscure and difficult
in the whole of the Pauline writings
and the many gaps in our knowledge

⁸ 1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 John 7.

⁹ *City of God*, XX.19.

have given rise to extravagant speculations."¹⁰

What is it? or him?—the language Paul uses refers to both a force and a person.

What is currently holding back the revelation of this man of lawlessness
and the rebellion that comes with him?

Well, in the context, whatever it is seems like a good thing—a God-thing.

It is part of the good purpose of God to restrain this precursor to the end
until the proper time—
the time which God alone knows
and which God alone determines.

And one reason that we are given in the gospels for the delay in the return of Christ
(if you can call it that)
is to provide time for the spreading of the gospel around the world.

Didn't Jesus say that "**the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world
as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come**" (Matt. 24:14).

It seems likely that Paul saw this restrainer as in some way
allowing this mission to the world to take place.

And because, when this restraint is taken out of the way,
rebellious anarchy will result,
many have felt that the restraint is some sort of
civil authority that maintains order,
for such authority contributes to an environment
in which the gospel can be proclaimed.

In Paul's own ministry, he was helped by the Roman authorities on several occasions,
as we see in the Book of Acts.

The earliest Christian interpreters saw this restrainer
as the Roman Empire as personified in the Emperor.

Others suggest that it was not the Empire as such
but just the principle of law and order which it represented.

Others say it is the power of God as personified in some governing angel,
as in the Book of Revelation,
an angel who somehow restrains the work of the devil,
"binding him" in some way,
and who will be taken away before the end.

A more recent interpretation is that this was the Holy Spirit of God
found in the church,¹¹

¹⁰ Leon Morris, TNTC, 125

¹¹ This is the Dispensational view, though the idea that it was the Spirit appears already in Chrysostom.

though it is difficult to conceive of Paul saying that
the Spirit of God will be **"taken out of the way,"**
for Paul expects the church to be in the world
when the man of lawlessness appears.

Frankly, I don't know what or who this restrainer is.
Paul knew;
the Thessalonians knew;
God knows—but we don't.

So what are we to make of all this?

It can be an interesting exercise to speculate about
who this man of lawlessness is
and what this rebellion is going to look like.
And Christians have engaged in that kind of speculation
through the history of the Church.
Some were sure he was the Roman Emperor Nero
or later the Emperor Diocletian, who severely persecuted the church.
During the Reformation, many Protestants were sure the Pope qualified
as the Antichrist,
And more recently, people pointed to Adolf Hitler or Mikael Gorbachav.
They were all wrong.

We can speculate on these questions of the who and the when,
but the more important question is
What is Paul's real interest here?
Why does he speak to the Thessalonians in this way,
and how does that apply to us?

When I come to a difficult passage of the Bible
I try to focus not on what I don't know,
but on what I do know.
And in this passage, there are two things that Paul wants to say very clearly
to these believers and to us—

1) First, he says, **don't be alarmed**—
don't be unsettled, or disturbed, and distraught
about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
and all the events that lead up to it.

Didn't Jesus tell us the same thing—
**"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars,
but see to it that you are not alarmed.
Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.
Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.
All these are the beginning of birth pains"** (Matt. 24:6-8).

Look, I don't know how this is all going to play out—

nobody does.

Is there going to be a terrorist attack
involving a nuclear bomb resulting in worldwide chaos?
Will the Middle East blow up into a world war?
Will some charismatic leader
arise as the head of some world power
and presume to take all authority to himself?
I don't know—
but we are to take comfort in the fact that no matter how out-of-control things appear,
our God is still on his throne,
he still rules,
and nothing, nothing at all, can thwart his good purposes for his people.

Yes, the secret power of lawlessness is already at work—
we see it all around us.
But God, in his common grace, is restraining it, somehow,
until the time he determines that it is right
for wickedness to finally show its hand.
And when it does, all hell might break loose.

And just then, when it seems things can't get any worse,
the Lord will come in glory,
and with the mere breath of his mouth
and by the sheer "**splendor of his coming**,"
he will destroy the forces of evil
and set all things right.

So don't be alarmed.
It's all going to work out.
We can say with confidence: "It is well with my soul."
For those who remain faithful in their allegiance to Jesus Christ,
for those who eagerly wait for his coming,
victory is assured.

In a world full of fear,
we are to be people full of hope,
for we have a blessed hope.

Don't be alarmed.

2) Second, Paul says, **don't be deceived**.
v. 9—"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan
displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,
10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing."

Didn't Jesus say the same thing—
"Watch out that no one deceives you.
For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,'
and will deceive many" (Matt. 24:4,5).
"For false Christs and false prophets will appear

and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—
if that were possible” (Matt. 24:24).

“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

So how do you keep from being deceived?

First, you’ve got to **know the truth**—

and where is that truth found?

Paul says that it is found in the authority of his apostolic word.

“Don’t be deceived by some prophecy, or report,

or letter supposed to have come from us”, he says in v. 2.

“Remember what I told you when I was with you.”

And where does that leave us?—

We now have that apostolic testimony preserved for us in the Bible.

The apostles were those commissioned by Jesus himself,

and empowered by the Spirit,

to speak in his name and to declare his truth.

The canon of the New Testament is composed of books

recognized to have that apostolic authority.

If you want to know the truth you have to go to this book.

Don’t listen to those who think they know more than they really do—

with ideas that go beyond what is written.

The Lord has revealed to us all we need to know.

Know the truth—

the truth of the word of God.

But simply knowing the truth is not enough.

Paul says we must also love the truth.

For we are deceived not only through our minds,

but also through our hearts.

We are deceived when we find ourselves being drawn toward that which is false,

that which is wrong,

that which is wicked.

Did you notice the last verse of our passage—

“all will be condemned who have not believed the truth

but have delighted in wickedness.”

The truth that we’re talking about here is the truth about God—

the truth about his goodness, his beauty, his love and mercy.

To deny that truth is to deny the fundamental moral principle of the universe.

For not to worship the Lord as the true God

is to set up an idol against God,
and all idolatry perverts reality and distorts our minds and hearts.
“A wrong idea of God means a wrong way of life,”¹²
and the Lord will confirm those who have delighted in wickedness
in their deception.

V. 10—“**The perish because they refused to love the truth**

and so be saved.

**11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion
so that they will believe the lie”**

John Stott puts it this way—

“Evil, not error, is the root problem.

Behind the great deception there lay the great refusal.

The whole process is grimly logical—

First, people delight in wickedness;

second, they refuse to believe and love the truth;

third, Satan gets in and deceives them;

fourth, God himself “sends” them a strong delusion,

giving them over to the lie they have chosen;

fifth, they are condemned and perish.

This is the downward slippery path—

the only way to be protected from being deceived is to love goodness and truth.

These are the dynamics that lie behind the final rebellion.

Deception by falsehood is the judgment of God

on those who close their eyes to the truth.”¹³

So we must not only know the truth,

we must love it—

we must be drawn to it,

we must find delight in it,

and we must desire to be conformed to it—

as that truth is revealed in Jesus Christ.

It is the glorious truth of the gospel—

the truth of God’s holy love displayed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

May we hold fast to that gospel,

and live in the light of that gospel,

as the children of light,

longing to see our glorious Savior

be exalted forever.

Prayer—

If the error that the Thessalonians fell into

was that the Day of the Lord had already come,

¹² So Bruce. cf. Rom. 2:8; 1 Cor. 13:6

¹³ So Bruce.

the error that threatens us is that the Day of the Lord will never come.
Instead of being alarmed,
we are asleep!

May we not be deceived—that Day will come.
And until it does, we must be faithful,

1Th. 5:1 Now, brothers and sisters,
about times and dates we do not need to write to you,
2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly,
as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.
1Th. 5:4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness
so that this day should surprise you like a thief.
5 You are all children of the light and children of the day.
We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.
6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep,
but let us be alert and self-controlled.
7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.
8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled,
putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.
9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath
but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep,
we may live together with him.
11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up,
just as in fact you are doing.

Closing Hymn: #241 *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*

Benediction:

1Ths. 5:23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.
May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

**Living in the Hope of Glory:
The Message of 2 Thessalonians: #3
July 8, 2018**

Discerning the Day 2 Thess. 2:1-12

Jesus warned his disciples that we would have trouble in this world before he came in glory to receive us to himself. We were not to be alarmed nor be deceived (Matt. 24:1-35). Already, within twenty years of his death, Christians struggled with these issues. And so it will be with us. Paul's words of instruction are meant to ground us in the truth so that we not be alarmed nor deceived but look to the day of the Lord with confidence and hope.

I. The Topic (v. 1):

**The Coming of Christ
and Our Being Gathered to Him**

II. The Problem (v. 2):

**The False Teaching that
the Day of the Lord has already come.**

III. The Answer (vv. 3-12):

Two Things have to occur first—

- **A certain event must take place**
- **A certain person must appear**

This will happen at the proper time.

IV. Our Response (vv. 2,12):

- **Don't be alarmed (v. 2)**
- **Don't be deceived—**

Know the truth (v. 2)

Love the truth (v. 12)

Sermon Discussion:

Discerning the Day
2 Thess. 2:1-12

- Does human history need a conclusion, a climax, a point of judgment, for life in this world to make sense? How does the coming of Christ provide that kind of culmination?
- What sort of teaching about the coming of Christ would unsettle you and cause you to be disturbed (cf. v. 2)? What is the truth that can cause you to stand firm?
- If you thought that today was the Day of the Lord, what would you do differently? Why?
- Read the warnings of Jesus in Matthew 24. What are Jesus' concerns for us? What should we watch out for? How can we be led astray? What can we do to prevent it?
- What does Paul's teaching about this "man of lawlessness" lead you to expect before the coming of the day of the Lord? Does that frighten you? How would Paul respond to your fears?
- How can you keep from becoming one of those who are deceived? How is their reception of the truth related to their way of life? How is it related to the action of God?