

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 138:1-8

New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 2:1-13

## The Pillar and Ground of Truth “The Magnificent Message of the Church” 1 Timothy 3:16

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In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the Apostle Paul gave a chronology of prophetic events that we may see come to pass in our lifetime.

- In verse 1, Paul identified the two major final events of this age as *“the coming of our Lord Jesus”* and *“our gathering together to Him”*.
  - Our gathering unto Him is the Rapture of the Church.
  - The coming of the Lord Jesus is His return to this earth as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

However, the Apostle Paul also said those two events will be preceded by:

- **The Falling Away** – Apostasy – the deliberate turning away from the true gospel and embracing Satan’s lies.
- **The Arrival of the Antichrist** – who will eventually exalt himself above God and demand to be worshipped as God.
- **The Removal of the Restrainer** – the method of operation of the Holy Spirit will be changed, allowing the rise of lawlessness and the Antichrist to carry out his prophetic assignments as illustrated in Revelation 6-19.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10, the Apostle said, when the Lord Jesus returns, He will consume the Antichrist with the word of His mouth, and destroy those who were deceived by the signs and lying wonders of the Antichrist, ***“Because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.”***

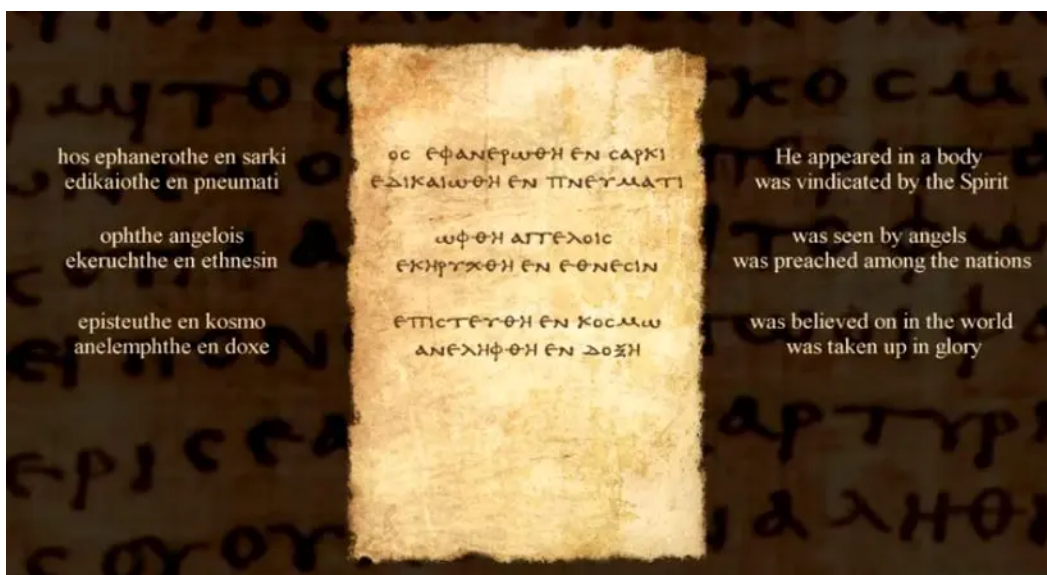
- The only unpardonable sin is the continual rejection of Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
- Right after the Antichrist enters and desecrates the new temple in Jerusalem, he will declare himself to be God and demand to be worshipped as God.
- Then God will send a “strong delusion” upon those who refused to receive the gospel during the Church Age and the first half of the Tribulation; those who will take the mark of the beast and worship the Antichrist as God.
- Paul said they will be condemned to hell because they ***“did not believe the truth, but they had pleasure in unrighteousness.”***

**1. The Primary Mission of the Church. Philippians 2:14-16. *“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”***

- God entrusted His truth unto His Church, and that truth is the theological foundation upon which the Church is built.
- Those who receive that truth, and are saved by that truth, are to love the truth, guard the truth, be guided by the truth, so they can walk in truth, and proclaim that truth with their lives and their lips for as long as He gives them breath.
- Therefore, given all the things happening in the world today, the primary mission of the Church is to firmly establish the foundation of our faith on the divinely inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, and uphold that truth against every lie Satan raises up against it.
- In John 17:14, Jesus told His Father, ***“I have given them Thy Word,”*** speaking of His plan for our redemption.
- In the book of Acts, the 120 disciples revolutionized the world by preaching and teaching the Word of God.

**2. The Primary Message of the Church. 1 Timothy 3:16 – *“And by common consent, great is the mystery of godliness. He who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”***

In his challenge to Timothy, the Apostle Paul quoted one of the first hymns or choruses used in the early church.



- ***“By common consent”*** – this six-line hymn embodied the six essential elements of the gospel message that had been agreed on by the disciples who became apostles.

- ***“Great is the mystery of godliness”*** – the cry of the pagans was that man could find happiness in the gods of this world. To oppose the gospel, the pagans cried out, ***“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”*** Paul said the cry of the Christians should be ***“Great is the mystery of godliness”*** i.e., we now know the sacred secret to the mystery of being made acceptable unto God, and that is our faith alone in Christ alone.
- ***“He who was manifest in the flesh”*** – In His spirit form, God the Father was invisible and unapproachable. However, when Jesus came to earth in the form of man, God became visible to man, for He was the image of the invisible God. Jesus was truly God in the flesh.
- ***“Was justified in the Spirit”*** – Being encased in the body of a man, Jesus had a human nature in that He faced the same issues as every other human – hunger, thirst, tiredness, and pain. However, because of His spiritual nature and His spiritual character, which was divine, Jesus was without sin.
- ***“Seen by angels”*** – The “unfallen” angels knew Jesus as the Son of God when He was one with the Father in heaven. These angels “attended” to Jesus from His immaculate conception to His glorious resurrection. Therefore, even though they could not comprehend it, for Angels do not know what it is like to be separated from God, they could attest to His incarnation, His crucifixion, His resurrection and His ascension back into heaven. The “unfallen” angels saw it all. However, while Jesus’ lifeless body lay in that tomb, in His spirit, Jesus went to that place of the departed spirits to declare His victory to those “fallen” angels; those demons who, because they exceeded the boundaries God imposed upon them, are bound in chains, and will be until the Great White Throne Judgment where they will be cast into hell with Satan for all eternity.
- ***“Preached among the nations”***– In Matthew 28:18-20, and Acts 1:8, Jesus challenged His disciples to get the whole gospel to the whole world – to ***“go and make disciples of all the nations.”*** However, Jesus did not tell the disciples to “go and save souls,” for the salvation of souls is the supernatural work of God. Jesus told the disciples to make other disciples in the same way He had made them disciples, by teaching the lost everything about Him that He had taught them.
- ***“Believed on in the world”*** – The preaching of the Word resulted in “faith,” and the hearing of the Word resulted in “salvation,” for ***“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”*** After Peter preached the gospel on the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls were added to the 120 disciples. However, by Acts 21:20, that number was more than 25,000 people. By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, those 120 men and women had turned the world upside down.
- ***“Taken up in Glory”*** – Having purged us from our sins, Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and the Father ***“gave Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”***