



Old Testament Reading – Psalm 20:1-9

New Testament Reading – 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

## **The Church Triumphant “Strong Delusion” # 2 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

**Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor**

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus told His disciples, ***“I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”***

- The word “church” is translated in our English Bibles from the Greek word “ekklesia,” which was not a religious word but rather a word that described a group of people who had been called out and assembled for a specific purpose.
- When Jesus said He would build His Church, He was, in effect, prophesying the future results of His discipleship of the men whom He would send out to proclaim the gospel of the redemptive purpose of His life, death, burial, and resurrection.
- The Church is a body of all those who have been called out of the darkness of this evil world and into the light of God’ Holy Word – the assembly of those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
- While there are local assemblies of believers around the world, there is only one universal Church, the Body of Christ.

### ***“I will build My Church!”***

- Jesus claimed ownership of the Church – those who believe in Him belong to Him.

- Christ's Church cannot be built with man's methods – He adds to His Church those whom He calls through the proclamation of the gospel.
- Those who respond to the gospel will confess with their mouth, ***“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”***

***“The gates of hell will not prevail against it.”***

- Satan and his followers will attack the Church throughout the ages, but at the end of this age, Satan and his followers will be cast into the lake of fire, but the Church will be victorious. It will return with Christ to rule and reign upon this earth for 1,000 years, and then in the New Heaven and New Earth forever – world without end.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the Apostle Paul outlined the satanic activities of the antichrist, a human leader who will emerge after the rapture of the Church to become the totalitarian leader of the world during the Tribulation.

- The term “antichrist” means “against Christ,” or “the false Christ,” as many will be deceived into believing he is deity.
- He will establish a seven-year peace covenant with Israel but then break it 3 ½ years later, which is called the Abomination of Desolation.
- His ultimate goal is to destroy all Christians and Jews and establish his satanic kingdom upon the earth.
- However, in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, the Apostle Paul said when the Lord Jesus returns, He will ***“Overthrow [the antichrist] with the breath of His mouth and destroy [his kingdom] by the splendor of His coming.”***
- In Revelation 19:19-20, the Apostle John said, ***“The beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”***

**1. The Future Apostasy – 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – *“Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first.”***

- The Greek word for “falling away” is “apostasia,” which is a departure from the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and an acceptance of a false gospel.
- **1 Timothy 4:1-2 – *“In latter times some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”***
- **2 Timothy 3:1-3 – *“In the last days, perilous times will come, for men will be...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power.”***
- **2 Timothy 4:3-4 – *“They will not endure sound doctrine. They will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”***
- Paul referred to this as “the falling away,” which means it will be a massive event at the end of this age. They will deny the necessity of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, establish their concept of the Christian faith, seek pastors who agree with their views, and design their own form of worship.
- Rather than to be challenged by the expository preaching of the Word of God, and encouraged and exhorted by the fellowship of the family of God, those who “fall away” will establish their own concept of God. This movement is called “Apostasy!”

**2. The Present Deception – 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – *“Let no one deceive you by any means.”***

- The Greek word for “deceive” means to lie, cheat, beguile, or seduce.

- In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the Apostle Paul said the antichrist will be empowered by Satan, ***“with all power, signs, lying wonders and unrighteous deception.”***
- In 2 Corinthians 11:14, the Apostle Paul said, “Satan’s messengers are angels of light,” – their offer appears to be light, but it is darkness; it seems to be helpful and beneficial, but it is destructive and deadly.
- In Colossians 2:4-8, the Apostle Paul identified the roots of deception as the ***“traditions of men,”*** and ***“the basic principles of the world.”***
- When the preaching of the Word of God is replaced with the futile philosophies of the world, and the fables of men, those without sufficient spiritual discernment can become deceived.
- On average, 100 churches in America close their doors each week, not because there are no more lost people to be saved or saved people to be discipled, but because pastors are not preaching the whole counsel of the Word of God.

### **3. The Strong Delusion – 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 – *“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.”***

- Strong delusion is a deluding influence that prevents a person from believing the truth.
- After the rapture of the Church, part of the wrath of God that will be poured out upon the earth is His divine judgment upon those who refused to hear the truth about their sinful nature, their need for a Savior, and Jesus as the Savior they needed.
- What unbelievers did to themselves by rejecting the truth of God’s Word, God will continue as His divine judgement upon them – they hardened their heart against God’s Word, and God seals them in their fate.
- If a person is under the constant preaching and teaching of the gospel, and yet they will not hear, nor will they see, nor will they believe, a day will come when they cannot hear, see, or believe, for God will send a deluding influence upon them so strong they will believe Satan’s lies as if they were God’s truth.
- God simply hardens the path in which they had chosen to walk.
- In Genesis 6, God said, ***“My Spirit will not always strive with man,”*** and He cleansed the whole earth with a flood.
- There comes a point when God stops striving to get sinful man to repent of his sin of unbelief and to be saved, and He turns them over to endure their sinful desires forever, with no hope of deliverance; their fate is sealed for eternity.
- The contrast between God’s amazing grace and God’s judgmental wrath:
  - **In salvation**, man acts in response to God’s choice.
  - **In damnation**, God acts in response to human choice.