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Monday Night Bible Study
Lakewood Church
December 20, 2021

II Thessalonians 2

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—**asserting that the day of the Lord has already come.** ³ 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. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 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, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders *that serve the lie*, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They 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 ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Romans 1:18-20 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

¹³ But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first-fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. ¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by

his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

- Somebody in the congregation had been saying that the Apostle Paul was preaching that the “day of the Lord” is already upon us! (This was the signal of God’s final justice on evil)
 - They believed that Jesus had come like a “thief in the night.” (1 Thess. 5:2)
 - They believed Jesus had abandoned them.
 - But Paul writes to the Thessalonians and comforts them by reassuring them that he had not said that at all.
 - Paul says: “Remember what I taught you”
 - o The world will keep producing rulers who rebel and exalt themselves above God.
 - Nebuchadnezzar: Isaiah 13-14
 - The king of the north: Daniel 7-12
 - Roman emperors
 - Any False “gods”
 - o The “rebel” will bring havoc and violence to God’s world, but Jesus will confront the rebel.
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The Day of the Lord:

- Genesis – God creates humans, and He gives them power. But they’re tempted by the Satan, the adversary.
- The Satan convinces the humans to put themselves in God’s place to define good and evil for themselves.
- We see this with the city of Babel (Babylon), where everyone elevates themselves to the place of God.
- God knows how tragic this will be if there’s an entire culture redefining good and evil, as if they are God.
- So God decides to confuse their language and scatter them. And Babylon becomes an icon in the Bible’s story. It is the picture of humanity’s corporate rebellion against God.
- The next time we see the idea of this city is in ancient Egypt, where the ruler’s there have enslaved God’s people (Israelites). But God delivers them from the hand of Pharaoh and swallows the Egyptians (red sea).
- Ever since then, the Israelites have celebrated **the day** of their freedom with the symbolic meal of a sacrificial lamb.

- After that, Israel goes into a land of their own. But they face new threats, new enemies, and new nations that want to destroy them. And so, since God had delivered them before, the Israelites would use this language, “The day of the Lord,” to describe their hopes that God would come and fight against any and all NEW threats against His chosen people.
- Unfortunately, later in the Scriptures, God’s own people become like “Babylon” and start defining for themselves what “good” and “evil” are. The prophet Amos makes this very clear in his writing.

- Amos 5:4-6

This is what the Lord says to Israel:

“Seek me and live;
⁵ do not seek Bethel,
do not go to Gilgal,
do not journey to Beersheba.
For Gilgal will surely go into exile,
and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.”
⁶ Seek the Lord and live,
or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire;
it will devour them,
and Bethel will have no one to quench it.

- Amos 5:18
Woe to you who long
for the day of the Lord!

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- From then on, we see the Israelites were taken into captivity in Babylon, their enemy. And suffered under continuous rule from other nations.
 - Babylon
 - Medo-Persia
 - Greece
 - Rome (where Jesus lived)
 - Israel suffered under the rule of oppressive empires.
 - Jesus saw the real enemy: human evil.
 - Jesus confronted evil in the desert when he was tempted with exploiting his power for self-interest. (Matt. 4) he resisted.
 - Jesus confronts the evil of all humanity by dying.

- God's love and life were more powerful than evil. By giving his life in an act of love. He opened a new way for people to escape Babylon, a new way to be human.
 - Revelation: the final day of the Lord.
 - o Jesus is pictured as a sacrificial bloody lamb. And when he finally comes in the end to confront evil for the final time riding on a white horse, he's bloodied before the battle even begins. It's because Jesus wasn't out for our blood. Rather, he overcame with his blood when he died for his enemies.
 - o And the sword is in his mouth. It's a symbol that means Jesus gets to define good and evil himself, and he will hold humans accountable when he brings final justice once and for all.
 - The Day of the lord is an invitation to resist the corruption of Babylon (and the Satan and evil), and to embrace the promise that God will free our world from corruption, evil, sin, and lies.
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1. Hold fast and stand firm to your faith.
2. Embrace the truth. Resist the lies and deception of evil by which people can be Lost.
 - a. Read and know the truth.
 - b. Replace the lie with the truth.
3. We tend to "hunker down" and "hold on" instead of focusing on what God has called us to do in the present. We long for Christ in such a way that we end up being so fixed on the future that, if we're not careful, it slows us down from embracing our work in the present.