

The Antichrist's Devastation

By David Harrell

Bible Text:

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Preached on:

Sunday, June 26, 2016

Please take your Bibles and turn to 2 Thessalonians 2. We're going to be looking primarily at verse 8, but we're also going to use that as a launching pad into some other passages in the book of Revelation. In order to prepare our hearts for our time, I must say that I shudder to think of what is going to happen to this world in the future when God pours out his wrath upon the nations. The Lord Jesus promised that just before his return there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. He went on to say unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. He went on to describe in Matthew 24, the utter indifference of the people of the world before he returns in judgment. He said, "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark." In other words, the people will just be preoccupied with the mundane matters of life, oblivious to judgment, scoffing at any warnings, and he says that they will do this until the day that Noah entered the ark and then, as in those days, he said, "They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be." Dear friends, I have an opportunity this morning to, once again, offer you the ark, the ark of God, meaning the saving grace that is inherent in the Gospel, and I pray that if you don't know the Lord, that today you will commit your life to him because today we look at a very difficult topic that has to do with coming judgment upon the world, and has to do with the antichrist who will one day rule this world for a while, and it also has to do with the devastation of the antichrist.

Before we look at the text closely, may I remind you that the Apostle Paul is here trying to bring clarity and comfort to the saints in Thessalonica because they had been deceived by false teachers and a phony letter, as well as some other people within the church that thought that the Godhead spoken to them; they had been deceived into thinking that somehow they were living in the day of the Lord, in that time of cataclysmic judgment that is promised that will fall upon the world just prior to the Lord's return. But Paul had made it clear that the church is going to be taken away before Daniel's 70th week, before those pre-kingdom judgments, and all of that must precede the final wrath of God. But again, because of the severity of their persecution and all of this confusion, they were frightened.

Paul also reminded them in chapter 2, the first five verses that the day of the Lord, he says will not occur until the apostasy brought on by the man of lawlessness, the antichrist, is revealed. And in verses 6 through 7, he went on to explain that the Holy Spirit is currently restraining the full manifestation of what he called the lawlessness that

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is already at work in the world today. And when we examine what Paul says with other Bible prophecies, we learn that in the middle of the tribulation the Spirit's restraint will be removed and then the rebellion that we see in some form today against God, at that point, it is going to be unleashed in ways that we cannot even imagine. The world will be inundated with defiance against the Most High and when he allows this lawlessness to have its full sway, Satan will also be allowed to present his counterfeit Christ, the final antichrist.

Now, he may be alive today. We don't know. And like Christ, however, he is going to come to do the will of his father, the devil. He will be a man who will be the embodiment of evil, the antithesis to look Lord Jesus Christ who is the embodiment of righteousness. And worse yet, when the antichrist is revealed as we studied last week, God is going to release a vast horde of demons to kill 1/3 of mankind according to Revelation 9, which will be the sixth trumpet judgment. All of this and much more awaits those who reject the Gospel and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Now, some might be saying, "Why is all of this important? It seems confusing. It seems hard to understand, and especially if we're not going to be here, why should we study this?" Well, the answer is quite simple: because it unveils the glory of our God. It unveils the majesty and the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore it encourages the saints. So many Christians in our affluent Western culture care little for any of this because, after all, we're too busy buying more stuff, right? We're too busy pleasing ourselves and watching all of our programs and going to our sporting events and all of those types of things. We really don't need to be encouraged because we have everything we need, right? But, folks, if you could walk in my shoes for just a week, walk in Pastor Joe's shoes for just a week, and then tell me that you are not absolutely craving for the Lord Jesus Christ to come and do what he is going to do. Read some of the emails I get from some of our listeners in other parts of the world who have lost their family members, who are being tortured for Christ. Spend some time with some of those dear saints even in our own family that are struggling right now on beds of affliction, and then tell me that you don't long to see the Lord return; that you don't have an appetite for Bible prophecy that speaks of all of those glories. Moreover, there is great application in prophetic truth. Sometimes we take that for granted. You will recall, for example, in 2 Peter 3, Peter speaks of that time when the entire universe is going to be uncreated before the new heavens and the new earth, nevertheless the succeeding passage makes an immediate application. He says, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation."

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So this needs to be our heart, our attitude. And folks, I must remind you that like never before in history, we are now seeing undeniable events that point to a climax of human history; events that can be seen as a preview of predictive prophecy. So many of the constellation of signs that we see in Bible prophecy are all pointing to the Lord's very soon return. I mean, just think of them. I mean, you see just this explosion of Islamic terrorism. You see this push with politicians for globalization. You see economic ruin on the horizon of virtually every country of the world; all the stunning debt that we have in our country and the never ending tax increases to facilitate the endless entitlements for people. No end in sight. Shocking corruption in our government. The growing hatred of all those who love Christ, all those who are part of the true church. We see just an astonishing moral free fall in our country.

I was reading the other day on the Christian News Network, the City Council members in New York City voted on Tuesday to require businesses to remove signs reading "Men" and "Women" outside single stall restrooms to further the city's policies on transgender restroom use. The commission's interpretive guide notes that businesses are prohibited from "intentionally failing to use an individual's preferred name, pronoun or title, such as repeatedly calling a transgender woman 'him' or 'Mister' when she has made it clear that she prefers female pronouns and a female title." The guidelines further state that employers "should not limit the options for identification to male and female only as some transgender and gender nonconforming people prefer to use pronouns other than 'he, him, his,' or 'she, her, hers,' such as 'they, them, theirs' or 'ze' or 'hir,'" which, by the way, if you look up in the urban dictionary now, those are gender neutral pronouns referring to someone who does not fit into gender binary and so forth. Violations, they went on to say, could result in penalties up to \$125,000 and up to a quarter of a million dollars for transgressions of the law that are considered to be "willful, wanton or malicious conduct." And finally Mayor DeBlasio and the commission additionally announced earlier this month that they had launched a \$265,000 ad campaign in recognition of LGBT pride month that touts the city's policy requiring that citizens be permitted to use the restroom that correlates with their "gender identity." The print ads and videos are now appearing on subway cars, bus shelters, phone booths and in newspapers and various social media placements, and it says, "Use the restroom consistent with who you are," featuring photographs of transgendered residents and then it also says, "Look past pink and blue."

We just had a gay pride parade here in Nashville last, I guess it was yesterday. I saw some of the video this morning earlier and, folks, it is beyond bizarre. I would encourage you to look at it. It is demonic. It's really terrifying. These dear people need the Lord. We need to love them and be unashamed in giving them the Gospel. We see growing apostasy in the church. We see Christian churches that are ostensibly evangelical that

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really bear no resemblance to a New Testament church. So many signs. We witnessed the miracle of the Israeli state and the gathering forces surrounding that tiny little country hell bent on destroying her. The Bible predicts all these things and so much more. No wonder in Revelation 1:3 the Lord says, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near."

Folks, what blessings await us when we learn of the end of the age and we understand more of the coming glory of our Savior. Bible prophecy, you see, reveals the summation of God's plan of redemption. It portrays the last chapter of human history. It gives us a detailed account of the consummation of all things, and obviously what the Apostle Paul wrote in his epistles parallel all of the other prophecies because he was inspired by the Holy Spirit who wrote it all. We especially see this in the book of Revelation where Christ himself glorifies himself when he pours out his wrath. We read of the judgment upon the nations, a vivid chronology of the unprecedented judgments that will fall upon the earth just before his coming. It discloses what's going to ultimately happen to Israel, including the final fulfillments of his promises to them in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. It describes the rise of the one world government and the reign of the most vile tyrant in the history of the world, the antichrist. It portrays the second coming of Christ and the battle of Armageddon, the establishment of the millennial reign, and so many things along this line. The great white throne judgment describes hell and the final state of the redeemed and so forth. Folks, I would simply say to you if it was important for the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal all of these things regarding the consummation of redemptive history whereby he will one day be glorified, should not these things also be important to us? Dear friends, I would encourage you to turn off your screens and set aside all of the things that distract you from the reality of what is really happening in the world and anticipate that day when the Lord will pour out his wrath upon the nations and he will be glorified.

Well, with this little background, let's pick it up where we left off last time, beginning in verse 6 of 2 Thessalonians 2. As I said earlier, this morning I would like to focus primarily just on the destruction of the antichrist by first examining what Paul has to say here but also looking at some other Bible prophecies that give further detail. Verse 6,

6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay [literally destroy] with the breath of His mouth.

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Now, in that text, Paul is alluding to a messianic text that was very important to the early church, one found in Isaiah 11:4, and there we read that the Lord "will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked." This is what Paul is thinking of as he writes this particular phrase. So in other words, when the Lord comes to slay his enemy, he can just speak it and it is done. So this lawless and arrogant fiend who has deceived the world with his Satanic signs and wonders that have catapulted him into some exalted status, this one who has caused the naïve and the rebellious to worship him as their Messiah, he's going to be overthrown by the very breath of the Lord Jesus that whispers judgment. This is so exhilarating to me. I hope it is to you. Isn't it great to know how it's going to end up? I mean, you just get hammered all the time and you just see the Lord mocked and Christians ridiculed and tortured, to think that the true Messiah, the one the antichrist is impersonating, is going to, as Paul went on to say,

bring him to an end by the appearance of His coming.

Bring him, referring to the antichrist, to the end. The term in the original means "to render inoperative; to shut down." He is going to shut him down. How? By the appearance of his coming. "Appearance" is the Greek term epiphaneia and it means "splendor," it means, "the ineffable glory and majesty of his coming; his parousia; his visible, physical presence." So he's literally saying the Lord Jesus Christ is going to bring the antichrist, he's going to shut him down by the ineffable glory and majesty of his visible, physical presence. An amazing thought.

Let me put this into perspective. Do you remember on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John saw the Lord and the Lord peeled back some of his flesh in some miraculous way that we can't understand, and the effulgence of the Shekinah glory of the living God blazed forth and it terrified them, do you remember that scene? They said that his face was brighter than the sun and just an amazing, amazing scene. Well, folks, that same dazzling light, that same inexpressible, incomprehensible grandeur of the living God is going to blaze forth in all of its fullness when the Lord Jesus returns in power and great glory. We cannot imagine the effulgence of the glory of God that will emanate from our Savior when he returns, but know this, it is going to be so magnificent and so powerful that Satan's great champion is going to be defeated.

You know, I have a hard time imagining this, I know you do too, but it's important that we meditate on these truths. Imagine for a moment, just allow your mind to visualize the Lord Jesus Christ descending to earth in his pre-incarnate glory. And if that isn't enough, he is attended by the heavenly host of his holy angels. And if that's not enough, he is also attended by his glorified saints, all of us. You remember in his first coming, the world

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saw him in his humiliation and there they witnessed his love and his mercy and his grace, but in his second coming, they are going to witness him in his glorification and they will behold his wrath, his justice and his vengeance. Some day, dear friends, the world that mocks our glorious God is going to see him in all of his holiness, holiness being the all-encompassing attribute of God that betrays his utter perfection, his utter transcendence. At the consummation of all things, the glory of his holiness is going to blaze forth. You know, today the world mocks it, right? But a day is coming when they will beg to die because of it but death will escape them.

Beloved, we should all experience even right now a profound sense of exhilaration when we think of these great truths, to know that our Lord that we sing about, that our kids are learning about, is going to return in unimaginable majesty, in uncontested regal authority as both Judge and Warrior. He's going to return physically to the earth to exercise his judicial power and destroy all of the remaining Christ-haters in the pre-kingdom judgments. So when Christ returns, man's long rebellion against God is going to be smashed. The messianic kingdom of Old Testament prophecy, long anticipated by both Jews and Christians, is finally going to be established on earth for 1,000 years which will lead to the eternal and universal judgment on both the living and the dead.

Oh, child of God, think of that. What an amazing day that is going to be. What an amazing day, a day when all of the weeping stops as the Lord promised in Revelation 5:5, "behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcom." And may I remind you of something else? The word of God says that when he comes in all of that glory, we're going to be like him. 1 John 3:1, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God," in other words right now. But he went on to say, "but it has not appeared as yet what we will be." Here's what it will be like, he says, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." And I trust that describes you.

Now, I want to give you some predictive future historical perspective here that will help us understand this season of time that Paul is describing when the Lord Jesus is going to destroy the antichrist and here we would have to go especially to the book of Revelation. I'm going to give you some big picture things. I don't have time to get into all of the passages but if we go into the book of Revelation, you will recall there the seal, trumpet and then the bowl judgments that will be poured out upon the earth, and by the time the antichrist is ready to be destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ, according to all that will happen that's described in Revelation, we know that by this time the earth will have been

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absolutely devastated by violent wars, worldwide famine; millions of people will have died by various plagues and diseases and wild animals; massive earthquakes, volcanoes. By this time, according to the book of Revelation, the earth's ecosystems are all destroyed, all of the vegetation is gone; asteroids and meteorties have been raining upon the earth; demons have been released upon the earth to torment men, causing them to seek death but they cannot die. We're told that loathsome and malignant sores will be on all who worship the beast. By this time, the oceans will be turned into "blood like that of a dead man and every living thing in the sea died." Imagine the oceans being a toxic, putrid pool of death, all marine life is gone. The same fate is going to befall all of the fresh waters of the world. Men are going to be scorched with the fierce heat of the sun. I find it interesting to see how the Lord very often brings judgment upon the world that really parallels some of their own idolatry. You know, people talk about global warming, well, they're going to get global warming. Darkness is going to encompass the earth. We're told in Revelation 16:10 that men will "gnaw their tongues because of pain, yet they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds." In Revelation 18, there is a description of the utter disintegration of life as we know it. There will be no commerce, no navigation in the sea or in the air. There is not even going to be any music by this time. There will be no marriage, no family, no joy. The only thing that will exist is an overwhelming sense of impending judgment and eternal doom from the one that they have blasphemed and mocked. And finally, leading right up to this, the entire earth is going to be shaken; 100 pound hailstones will pulverize the armies of the antichrist as they surround Jerusalem with the great battle of Armageddon. And all of these signs point to the parousia, the coming presence of the Lord Jesus.

And the world is going to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is really the cause of all of their woes. I mean, earlier they have said in Revelation 6:16, we read that they have cried out to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" We also know that leading up to that time, the Gospel has been faithfully preached by the 144,000; there will be 12,000 Jewish men from each of the 12 tribes that will come to saving faith in Christ and proclaim the Gospel. There will be also the two witnesses that have been faithfully proclaiming the word. Remember, these are the ones that were killed and then the people left them there to rot but then they saw them rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. So people will have absolutely no doubt as to the cause of these horrors that have come upon the earth. You know, people today through reason and conscience according to Romans 1, have no excuse. They know who it is but they suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

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Then when the world is pitch black, the Lord Jesus, according to Luke 21:27, will come and he said this in that text, "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Matthew's Gospel adds, "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky." And what is the sign? Grammatically in the original language, it says that it's the sign of the Son of Man, the sign which is the Son of Man. It's what we call a subjective genitive. It denotes that he is the sign. In other words, against the backdrop of total blackness with all of the horror and devastation of the world, against that backdrop, the resplendent light of the Shekinah glory of the living Christ is going to be fully unveiled. What an amazing scene. Christ describes his appearance in Revelation 1:7, he says, "Behold, He is coming with clouds and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him." And in Revelation 19:11, John says, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war."

Now, to give you an even further more vivid account of what is going to happen when the antichrist is defeated, I want to take you to Revelation 19. We're going to look at verses 17 through 21 for a few minutes. Now, here's the scene. The armies of the antichrist have surrounded Jerusalem. They are ready to engage their mortal enemy, the Warrior King, the Lord Jesus Christ, who obviously contests the beast's authority as ruler of the world, the antichrist. The Lord is contesting that and there is a possibility that the Lord has now returned to earth and that he is in Jerusalem, and perhaps the army of the redeemed, those of us that will return with him, are still hovering in the sky along with the angelic host. We don't really know but whatever the circumstances, the antichrist with his vast array of military might has assembled now at Megiddo and he is fully intent on engaging the rider of the white horse, the Lord Jesus, and there is no reason not to believe that the world, especially the satanically empowered antichrist and the false prophet, are not fully aware of Bible prophecy which clearly states in Daniel, as well as in Revelation, that the beast would only be able to spew his venomous blasphemies for 42 months, in other words for 3 1/2 years after the abomination of desolation. Remember in Daniel 7:25, "He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time," in other words, three and half years. You see, they will have to have known this at that time. They will know what the word of God says but they think they're able to overcome it. Daniel went on to say, "But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him." So think of this: knowing that his allotted time is basically up according to the word of God, the antichrist nevertheless assembles his vast army with his 10 nation confederacy. They prepare to do

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battle, foolishly thinking that somehow they can still thwart the purposes of God. According to Isaiah 14, according to Zechariah 12, as well as Zechariah 14 and even in Joel 3, the antichrist we know is going to amass his forces and launch one final assault against Jerusalem but Christ is going to utterly destroy them.

Now, this is the scene here of that destruction in Revelation 19, beginning in verse 17, and in order to really enhance just the dramatic suspense of the scene and to depict the utter folly of the enemy, notice what the world suddenly sees in verse 17. John says, "Then I saw an angel standing in the sun." Now, obviously the sun temporarily is going to pierce the darkness of the fifth bowl judgment just long enough for this angel to appear and then the sky is going to go black again in preparation for what the Lord is going to do, and certainly the sun is not going to be a welcome sight to them because it will be eclipsed by this colossal angel and his position will make him impossible not to be noticed. So imagine those enemy forces that have followed the antichrist, they have been convinced by all of the signs and wonders that he has done as he has been empowered by Satan, they have been convinced that they are going to overcome what God has said in his word. I would imagine when they see that angel, they will begin to think differently.

The text goes on to say, "and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, 'Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.' Imagine the sheer terror that will grip their hearts. And what an insult here, the angel doesn't even address the armies here but rather he summons the vultures to come to supper, and their corpses are going to be the main dish. I mean, this is the ultimate humiliation. "You are about to become carrion for the birds." By the way, in Matthew 24:28, Jesus describes them as vultures. He says, "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

Then notice they are summoned here in verse 17, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God." It's interesting, that's quite a contrast to what the Lord said earlier in verse 9 where he speaks to the blessed saints who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Well, obviously the human carnage is going to be something beyond anything that we have ever seen in the history of the world. Chapter 14 and verse 20 also predicts this scene, there we read, "And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles." There the Lord uses hyperbole to describe the slaughter. The carnage is going to extend for a distance of 200 miles. By the way, that's from northern Israel to southern Israel. So this will be a massive stretch of corpses capable of feeding millions of birds.

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Some have asked, "Well, where would all these birds come from?" Well, according to Israel's Jewish Virtual Library, quote, "Israel is located at the junction of three continents and it is crossed by migrating birds on a scale unparalleled anywhere. Studies over the past decades show that about 500 million birds cross Israel's narrow airspace twice every year in the course of their migration. Consequently, Israel has become an attraction for bird enthusiasts worldwide." It's also interesting to note that the Israeli Air Force and the various airline companies that fly in there have learned to use technology to determine where these birds are so that they can avoid running into them.

Well, bottom line, there is not going to be any shortage of birds and they're going to be hungry by this time, but I don't think the purpose of this text is to describe the cleanup procedure but rather to emphasize through hyperbole the utter indignity of how their remains are going to be treated, an indignity reminiscent of the way the two witnesses were dishonored. Remember, their corpses were left unburied out in a public place so that the world could watch them decompose and rejoice before they ascended into heaven. Amazing thought.

Notice the birds are going to eat corpses of every strata of mankind. Verse 18, "in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men," and then notice he goes on to speak of "the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them." You think, "Oh come on, we don't use horses anymore." Well, you've got to understand by this time the cataclysmic judgments upon the earth will have knocked out all of the satellites and will have virtually eliminated all of the hi-tech forms of modern warfare. There is not going to be any more aviation. There is not going to be any jets, no UPS, no guided missiles, none of those types of things. All of the navigation is gone, it's impossible because of the toxic waters in the sea. So there is no long-range warfare. Folks, it will return to medieval living. All of the roads are destroyed. The topography of the earth is going to be very difficult to traverse because of all of the earthquakes and the catastrophic plagues that have wrought havoc upon the earth. Even petroleum fuel is going to be difficult to come by. So obviously horses and mules will be used. They will be of great value. But it's interesting, even the horses will become carrion for the vultures when the Lord attacks. "The flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great," he says.

Then in verse 19, "And I saw the beast," there's the antichrist, "and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army." Again now, the Lord may already be in Jerusalem with the army of the saints and his angelic forces hovering in the skies. We don't know, but this may help explain why the word of God speaks of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and how they will, according to Revelation 11:13, suddenly give glory to the God of heaven. That may be when this

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happens. We don't know, but we do know that the Antichrist and his allies are going to amass their forces in this region, according to verse 19, "to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army." It's also interesting according to Daniel 11:45, we read that the antichrist "will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain," which, by the way, is exactly where Megiddo is if you've ever been to Israel, "yet he will come to his and no one will help him."

Now, we're not told about the specifics of the attack but we know the outcome. It's going to be devastating, and the next scene is the cause of great rejoicing. Verse 20, "And the beast," the antichrist, "was seized." By the way, that means captured alive. An amazing thought. "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." An amazing thought. The horror of their fate boggles the mind. Somehow they will be instantly suited for the torments of hell, even as believers will be suited for the glories of heaven.

Notice again the ultimate fate here of these vile creatures, these two were thrown alive, it says, into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. Brimstone is a sulfuric chemical that can become explosively hot. By the way, this is what God used to rain down upon the homosexuals in Sodom and Gomorrah. In Matthew 13:42 and 50, Jesus described hell as "a furnace of fire where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth." And in his final description of the judgment on the lost, Jesus said in Matthew 25:41, "Depart from me, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."

And what happens to the rest of the forces? Verse 21, "And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." What a tragic end this will be to all of those who have hardened their hearts against the Lord.

Well, while this brief overview I hope provides some clarity and comfort, we've got to remember that ultimately what Paul wanted them to hear is not so much all of the details, even though God gives that to us in his word, but what he wants them to do is give thanks to God for what he has done for them. That's what he says here. I'm getting ahead of myself here and we'll close with this in 2 Thessalonians 2, you'll notice in verse 13 in light of all these things he said, "But we," talking to the saints, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord

The Antichrist's Devastation

By David Harrell

Bible Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:8
Preached on: Sunday, June 26, 2016

Jesus Christ. So then, brethren," in light of all this, here's what I want you to do, "stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us." In other words, let these incomprehensible but certain realities that will come upon the world cause you to thank the Lord for choosing you for salvation, "that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." And that is the challenge that I leave you with here this morning. Oh, what hope and help we have in Christ, amen? An amazing amazing thing.

Let's pray together.

Father, we are always sobered when we read of the things that you will bring upon the earth in an effort to bring glory to your name and to judge the wicked. Lord, again we are reminded as we contemplate these things, that were it not for your grace, we would be among them. So Lord, for that reason, as Paul has told us to do, we thank you for choosing us. We had nothing to bring to you. We give you praise for our salvation and we long for that day when our glorious Savior will be glorified in all of his fullness. And if there be one here that knows nothing of your saving grace, I beg you to be pleased to move over them with such a compelling sense of conviction that today they will repent and they will place their faith in the living Christ. For it's in his name that I pray. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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