

## Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

### Scenario

*In his first letter to the Church in Thessalonica Paul taught the church that when Jesus returns there will be a resurrection of the dead and then the rapture of those alive leading to a reunion of both in the clouds to be with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The Church has now received a message, allegedly from the Apostle Paul, saying that Jesus has already come so Paul writes a second letter to deny that the message was from him and to instruct them further on the subject.*

1. On Sunday Glyn spoke about some of his early experiences of hearing about, and responding to, teaching about the second coming of Jesus. What has been your experience? Is this a subject that

- i. You are deeply interested in and have spent time studying?
- ii. You have considered a little – but only when someone has preached on it?
- iii. You have little interest in?
- iv. You didn't know Jesus was coming again?

2. The Thessalonian church had received false teaching dressed up as being a message sent from Paul (v2).

- i. How do we discern whether a message, sermon, or prophecy is genuinely biblical or misleading?
- ii. What safeguards can we build into our spiritual life to keep us from drifting away from the truth?

3. Have you ever encountered Christian teaching that seemed convincing but later proved unbiblical? If so, how did you respond?

4. In verse 3 Paul told the church that “the rebellion” needed to arrive before Jesus returned (This is believed to refer to the falling away of Christians from the faith) and in verse 4 he speaks of an antichrist, the “man of lawlessness” (who would exalt himself as God) needing to arrive before Jesus did.

- i. Why might some Christians, turn away from Christ and abandon their faith?
- ii. What kinds of ‘signs and wonders’ do you think could deceive people in our generation?

5. Paul had told the church in his first letter that Jesus would come suddenly like “*a thief in the night*” (1 Thessalonians 5:2). In this second letter Paul says that some person or power is holding back the man of lawlessness until “*the proper time*” (v6), and then when that restraining force is removed the man of lawlessness will be unleashed (v7), only to be destroyed by Jesus when He returns (v8). If God has a set time for all these, and other, end time events to occur, in what ways can we “be ready” for His return? How should the promise of Jesus’ return affect our daily life, choices, and priorities?

6. Paul says that people will refuse to love the truth and be saved so God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie (v10-12). How do you interpret this strange phrase that seems out of character with God’s nature? (compare it with Romans 1:21-25).

7. Paul urged the Thessalonians to “*stand firm and hold fast to the teachings.*” (v15). What does that instruction look like in your life today? Are there any biblical truths or doctrines you’ve struggle to hold fast to? Why?

8. Paul taught the church, in his first letter to them, to encourage one another with his teaching about the second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:18). What encourages you the most about the return of Jesus?

### To prayerfully ponder and respond to

Paul prayed that God would strengthen the church in “*every good deed and word.*” (v17) What is one “*good deed*” or “*word*” you feel you could put into action this week?