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“The Antidote for Fear of the Future.”
THE REASSURANCE TO THE CHURCH
Concerning Christ's Return and The Day of The Lord
2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

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Introduction: Glenn Beck has been talking on his radio talk show (WIBW, 580 AM 8-11 am) (also on CNN Headline news at 6, 8, and 10 pm) about Mahmoud Ahmadinajad, the 6th President of Iran. Glenn seems to me to be almost paranoid. He is afraid that Ahmadinajad will blow American cities up with a nuclear bomb in order to bring about the return of the 12th Imam, the Muslim equivalent of the Messiah.

- A. **The Unfounded Fear. 2:1-2.** (Paul's Exhortation Not to Fear That the Day of the Lord Has Already Come!) 2:1-2. (2 Th 2:1) Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, [This is the RAPTURE.] ... (2 Th 2:2) that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit [behind a false prophecy] or a message [a report] or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.
1. What does **coming** mean? It can mean Jesus' first coming, the rapture (His coming FOR His saints), or His 2nd Coming WITH His saints to establish His kingdom on the earth. You have to look at the context. Here Paul is talking, I believe, about the Rapture, because He speaks of “our gathering together to Him.”
 2. What is the Day of the Lord?
 - a. It is the time when God and Jesus become dramatically and personally involved in punishing evil and rewarding faith and righteousness.
 - b. It is the time beginning with the Tribulation period (the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb); the Second Coming of Christ; Jesus' Millennial Kingdom; the Destruction of the Present Heavens and Earth, the Great White Throne Judgment of all the wicked dead. All these pave the way for believers to spend eternity with God and Jesus in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth in the New Universe. When Jesus came to the earth the first time He was the Sacrifice. When He comes to the earth the Second time He will come as the Sovereign who will tolerate no rebellion or evil. It will not be a democracy. It will be a theocracy, and no rebels will survive, much less enjoy their rebellion.

B. The General Sequence of Events. 2:3-5

1. The arrival of the apostasy. 2:3. (2 Th 2:3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,
 - a. the apostasy – means “the falling away; The Rebellion.” As violent and corrupt as it was in Noah’s day, so it will become in the day when all Christians are removed from the earth. When all the Christians have been taken up in the Rapture, morality and God-consciousness on the earth will plummet, just like falling off the edge of a cliff. Remember that when all true Christians are removed, the world will still have plenty of professing Christians. With no restraint, these professing Christians will show their true colors and depart from orthodoxy and Biblical truth like drunken sailors at an orgy.
 - b. Rebellion against God, and immorality and evil will skyrocket off the charts. False religions and false philosophies will rule the day across the globe.
2. The unveiling of a sinister figure 2:3-4
 - a. His character 2:3. (2 Th 2:3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,*
 - 1) The man of (the) lawlessness. He has total disregard for the Laws of God. He will say anything and do anything to put himself into power, regardless of the truth or any past promises he has made. His only law he will obey is “ME FIRST!” He will be a ruthless tyrant and dictator, the kind who would kill his own mother if it would advance his cause.
 - 2) The son of (the) destruction
 - a) The point here is not that this individual destroys, but that he himself is so assured of being destroyed that his father is destruction, and that is his essence as well, being the son of destruction (684 *apoleia*)! NIV translates it "the man doomed to destruction;" KJV = "son of perdition." *Apoleia* is a noun presumably derived from the verb (622 *apollumi*) used in John 3:16 "should not perish."

- b) That he is a man doomed to destruction is borne out by the fact that in 2:8, Christ is said to destroy (355 *analisko*) him by the breath of His mouth and to invalidate him or make him obsolete (2673 *katargeo*) by the splendor of His coming!

- b. Who exalts himself. 2:4. (2 Th 2:4) who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.
 - 1) The one setting against and
 - 2) Exalting himself over
 - a) Everything being called God or
 - b) [Every] object of worship

- c. Who sits as God in the temple of God.
 - 1) Going so far as to sit in the shrine of the God
 - 2) Demonstrating that he himself is God

- d. The reminder of the apostle: "Don't you remember that when I was still with you I used to tell you these things?" 2:5. (2 Th 2:5) Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

C. The Specific Sequence Of Events. 2:6-12.

- 1. The present restrainer. 2:6-7a. The **existence** of a restraining force 2:6-7a. (2 Th 2:6) And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.
 - a. The time of the restraining: Now 2:6
 - b. Their knowledge of the restraining: "Ye know that which is restraining"
 - 1) "That which restrains" has been variously interpreted as the Holy Spirit, government, and the church. I prefer *the Holy Spirit in the church*.

- c. The duration of the restraining 2:6. (2 Th 2:6) And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.
 - 1) Until [the "Lawless One"] be unveiled
 - 2) In his own time
 - d. That which is being restrained: The mystery of lawlessness, which is already operating 2:7a. (2 Th 2:7) 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.
 - 1) The mystery of lawlessness does not here mean that the "Lawless One," the "Antichrist," is a fresh revelation previously unforecast in the Old Testament, for there exists considerable prophecy concerning him, e.g., Daniel 7, 9. The context here is that presently the lawless one is veiled, i.e., hidden from human view. Both v. 6 and v. 8 speak of his being unveiled, or revealed to the world. Then it will no longer be a mystery as to who he is.
 - 2) It is clear from 2 Thess. 2:8 that the mystery of lawlessness culminates in an evil world ruler that will not be revealed until the restraining force is removed. That is still future.
2. The **removal** of the restrainer 2:7b. (2 Th 2:7) 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.
- a. The restrainer will continue to operate
 - b. Until he is removed from the situation
3. The **unveiling** of the "Lawless One: 2:8. (2 Th 2:8) Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

4. **The power** of the "Lawless One" 2:9a. (2 Th 2:9) *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,
 - a. His presence is [fueled] by the activity/energizing of Satan
 - 1) 1753 *energeia*: working, efficiency; in the NT used only of superhuman power, whether of God or of the Devil (*On-Line Bible*).
 - b. The evidences of his Satanic power (--his presence on earth is) with all
 - 1) **Power**
 - a) The term *power* in this context simply indicates a supernatural power to perform miracles;
 - 2) **Signs**
 - a) the term *signs* refers to miracles performed to authenticate the supernatural credentials of the miracle worker;
 - 3) **Wonders**
 - a) the term *wonders* indicates miracles that create awe and amazement in people.
 - b) These three words power (*dunamis* 1411), signs (*semeion* 4592), and wonders (*teras* 5059) are also cited by the Apostle Paul as the signs of an apostle (!) in 2 Co 12:12, "Truly the signs <4592> of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs <4592>, and wonders <5059>, and mighty <1411> deeds <1411>." The difference, of course is that the apostles' miracle-working abilities stem from the truth, while the "Lawless One's" will stem from error and deceit grounded in Satan!

5. **The deception of the "Lawless One": 2:9b-10.** His presence is accompanied ... 2:9b-10
 - a. With deceitful miracles (lit. wonders -- of a lie!) 2:9b. (2 Th 2:9) *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,
 - 1) In this case, the wonders originate from deceit. They are true miracles, but they deceive the over-awed human observers. In other words, the "Lawless One's" miracles are empowered by the father of lies, Satan (John 8:44); moreover the whole purpose of these miracles is to deceive people into remaining in Satan's kingdom rather than joining God's; to honor the "Lawless One" as Messiah rather than Jesus of Nazareth.
 - b. With all deceit promoting unrighteousness in those perishing 2:10. (2 Th 2:10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.
 - 1) Reason: Because of their not having received the love of the truth
 - 2) Potential result: That they might be saved
6. **The judgment of God 2:11-12**
 - a. The consequence (of their not having received the love of the truth): God's continual sending to them a working (operative force) of error 2:11. (2 Th 2:11) For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,
 - b. The short-term result: That they should believe the lie
 - c. The long-term result: In order that they might all be judged 2:12. (2 Th 2:12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.
 - 1) The ones not having believed the truth
 - 2) But having had pleasure in the unrighteousness

7. **The destruction of the "Lawless One" 2:8b.** (2 Th 2:8) Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

- a. The description of the destruction: devouring
- b. The executor of destruction: The Lord Jesus
- c. The mode of destruction: By the breath of (the Lord's) mouth
- d. The second description of the destruction: abolishing
- e. The executor of abolishing: The Lord Jesus
- f. The mode of abolishing: By the brilliant appearance of His arrival
 - 1) 2015 *epiphaneia* is translated by the AV "appearance" 5x and "brightness" once, here in 2 Thess. 2:8. It comes ultimately from 5316 *phaino*, to appear or to shine. Light is definitely part of the connotation, as the verb 2014 *epiphaino* is used of light shining and stars becoming visible (see Luke 1:79 and Acts 27:20). Here I have combined the concepts of light and appearance in the phrase "brilliant appearance."
 - 2) Here I have translated "*parousia*" (3952) as "arrival," combining the elements of "coming" and "presence."

D. **Be Grateful for Your Salvation! 2:13-14.** (Paul's Gratitude for Their Salvation from the Judgment of the Day of the Lord.)

1. **God has chosen us for salvation. 2:13**

- a. The obligation of thanks: We ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers 2:13. (2 Th 2:13) 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.
- b. Because of their having been beloved by the Lord 2:13. (2 Th 2:13) 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.

- c. Because of God's having taken them for Himself from the beginning unto salvation. (2 Th 2:13) 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.
- 1) 0138 *haireomai*, probably akin to 142; TDNT - 1:180,27; vb AV - choose (3)
 - a) 1) to take for oneself, to prefer, choose
 - b) 2) to choose by vote, elect to office
 - c) Greek *heilato* from *haireomai*, 138. Not the normal *exelexato*, "elected," implying selection; but *taken for Himself*, implying His having *adopted* them in His eternal purpose (LXX.; Deut. 7:7; 10:15).
 - 2) By the setting apart of Spirit. (God's Part.)
 - 3) And by faith in truth. (Man's Part.)
2. God called us through the gospel. (The Good News about Jesus and how He died to save us.) Because of God's having called them to salvation 2:14. (2 Th 2:14) It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- a. Method: Through Paul's gospel
 - b. Purpose: To the obtainment of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. “God **called** the readers to salvation by using the **gospel** as it was proclaimed by the apostolic missionaries in Thessalonica. God's purpose in doing so was that the believers **might** one day **share** the splendor and honor that **Jesus Christ** now enjoys, seated at the right hand of the Father (cf. 1:10-12).” (Thomas L. Constable, *TBKC*)

- E. Choose to Stand Firm! 2:15. Stand firm and hold fast to the truth of the Bible as you have been taught by Paul and the other Apostles! The call to **steadfastness** 2:15. (2 Th 2:15) So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.
1. The reason for the call: "So then" -- in view of God's having loved, chosen, and called them
 2. The designation of those addressed: brothers
 3. The exhortations to those addressed
 - a. Stand
 - b. Hold the traditions which you were taught
 - 1) Either orally
 - 2) Or through a letter from Paul
 - 3) Traditions (3862 paradosis), a "giving over," frequently referring to oral tradition. In the 8 gospel uses, it invariably refers to the teachings of the elders which were in addition to the Scripture and always seen in a negative light as thwarting the purpose of the straightforward commands of God in the Old Testament. In the 5 uses in the epistles, all have a positive connotation except for Col. 2:8, which refers negatively to the traditions of men. 3, including 2 Thess. 2:15, refer positively to Paul's traditions as needing to be obeyed, and 1 to the beneficial teachings of the Jewish elders which Paul received prior to his conversion.

F. Appreciate God’s Past Gifts. 2:16. (2 Th 2:16) Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, [This is Paul’s prayer request to Jesus and to God the Father.]

1. Love. God – “The one having loved us.”
2. Comfort. [God] – “The one having given us eternal encouragement
 - a. Encouragement: The word paraklesis 3874 means literally, a calling out alongside. It is a motivational activity, used of Jesus Himself and the Holy Spirit. In a context of sorrow, the paraklete is urging the sad person to be encouraged or to be comforted. When sorrow is not in the context, the word is better translated "encouragement" or "to encourage" (parakaleo 3870), as here in 2 Thess. 2:16, 17.
3. Hope. [God] – The one having given us “and good hope by grace”

G. Ask God To Strengthen And Comfort You. 2:17. (2 Th 2:17) comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

1. In every good work.
2. In every good word.

H. Conclusion

1. The end of the world is not going to come from Mahmoud Ahmadinajad, President of Iran. There is a much more sinister figure coming than Tom. He is the Antichrist. But Jesus will easily destroy him when He returns to conquer this earth.
2. Meanwhile the Holy Spirit is restraining evil in His own power, and He is also using the Church.
3. Let us be diligent to serve Jesus with every good work we perform and with every good word we speak.

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