

# The Lord Will Triumph

2 Thess 2:1-4, 8-17  
SS Lesson for 04/28/2013

**Devotional Scripture:** 2 Cor 2:14-17

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# Introduction

## Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson exclaims about how **The Lord Jesus Will Triumph**. The **study's aim** is to help us understand what Paul teaches about future events and the need to stand firm in the hope Jesus Christ gives us. The **study's application** is to reinforce the hope we have in the triumph in Jesus so that we will remember it when we face difficult times and to help us stand firm in the teachings and hope we have during times of chaos and turmoil.

### Key Verse: 2 Thess 2:16-17

*16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

### Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Few words are as misunderstood as the word "hope," which appears in II Thessalonians 2:16. The problem is not the word itself but the fact that many people add a word to it—the word "so." Our sure hope in Christ is replaced by a tentative "I hope so." The reason biblical hope should be viewed as secure is not that there is something magical about hope itself. Our hope is certain because it is based on promises from God, who never lies and never fails. When New Testament writers used the word, therefore, they often coupled it with other words, such as "patience" or "steadfastness" (cf. Rom. 8:25; 15:4; I Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:19). They taught that our anticipation of the eternal reward in heaven should cause us to work hard and produce fruit for the kingdom. Parents often use the expectation of an event or joyful occasion to cause their children to work harder or be on their best behavior. Their expectation of what is ahead motivates them to fulfill their responsibilities in the present. That is the way the Apostle Paul used the word "hope." Notice how he emphasized that thought in the golden text for this week's lesson: "comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work." A belief in the imminent return of the Savior should cause believers to live in ways that will please Him. In several parables Jesus showed that failing to expect His imminent return would cause workers to grow lax in their duties (Matt. 24:48—25:13). However, if a person truly believes Jesus may come at any moment, he readies himself and faithfully carries out his tasks. The Apostle Peter also asserted that a belief in the Lord's imminent return should cause us to live godly lives (II Pet. 3:11 -14). In I John 3:3, the aged Apostle John focused on the same thought with these words: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The obvious question for believers is "Do you have the hope of the Lord's coming stirring your heart and motivating you to live for Him?" Yes, it is true that the same message has been preached for nearly two thousand years and He has not yet returned. He has a reason; it is His divine schedule, not ours. Peter even warned that mockers would scorn the message of the Lord's return (II Pet. 3:3-4). While a Christian might never consider himself to be mocking the truth of the Lord's return, he may be demonstrating the same attitude in actions rather than words. The hope of the Lord's imminent return has helped believers persevere through the centuries, and it can keep you going through the hardest days. When illness strikes you, remember that Jesus is coming for you and that there is no death or dying in heaven. When friends and family disappoint you and life seems unbearable, tell yourself again, "He knows what I am going through and will come to take me to the home He has been preparing for me." When you feel like giving up, remember that you want to be ready to greet Him when He comes. Biblical hope is never "I hope so." It is a confident expectation that keeps you standing strong and sleeping peacefully until He returns.

### Commentary from Barnes Notes

The main object of 2 Thess 2 is to correct an erroneous impression which had been made on the minds of the Thessalonians respecting the second coming of the Saviour, either by his own former letter, or by one forged in his name. They had received the impression that that event was about to take place. This belief had produced an unhappy effect on their minds; 2 Thess 2:2. It became, therefore, necessary to state the truth on the subject,

in order to free their minds from alarm; and this purpose of the apostle leads to one of the most important prophecies in the New Testament. The chapter comprises the following points:

I. An exhortation that they would not be alarmed or distressed by the expectation of the speedy coming of the Saviour; 2 Thess 2:1-2.

II. A statement of the truth that he would not soon appear, and of the characteristics of a great apostasy which must intervene before his advent; 2 Thess 2:3-12.

In this part of the chapter, the apostle shows that he did NOT mean to teach that that event would soon happen, by stating that before that there would occur a most melancholy apostasy, which would require a considerable time before it was matured.

(a) That day would not come until there should be a great apostasy, and a revelation of the man of sin; 2 Thess 2:3.

(b) The character of this "man of sin" was to be such that it could not be mistaken: he would be opposed to God; would exalt himself above all that is called God; and would sit in the temple showing himself as God; 2 Thess 2:4.

(c) There was a restraint then exercised which prevented the development of the great apostasy. There were indeed causes then at work which would lead to it, but they were then held in check, and God would restrain them until some future time, when he would suffer the man of sin to be revealed; 2 Thess 2:5-7.

(d) When that time should come, then that "wicked" one would be revealed, with such marks that he could not be mistaken. His coming would be after the working of Satan, with power and signs and lying wonders, and under him there would be strong delusion, and the belief of a lie; 2 Thess 2:8-12. This great foe of God was to be destroyed by the coming of the Saviour, and one object of his appearing would be to put an end to his dominion; 2 Thess 2:8.

III. The apostle then says, that there was occasion for thankfulness to God, that he had chosen them to salvation, and not left them to be destroyed; 2 Thess 2:13-14.

IV. An exhortation to stand fast, and to maintain what they had been taught (2 Thess 2:15), and a prayer that God, who had given them a good hope, would comfort their hearts, closes the chapter; 2 Thess 2:16-17.

### Commentary from Barnes Notes

#### 2 Thess 2:16

[*Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself*] This expression is equivalent to this: "I pray our Lord Jesus, and our Father, to comfort you." It is really a prayer offered to the Savior—a recognition of Christ as the source of consolation as well as the Father, and a union of his name with that of the Father in invoking important blessings. It is such language as could be used only by one who regarded the Lord Jesus as divine.

[*And God even our Father*] "And God, and our Father;" though not incorrectly rendered "even our Father." If it should be contended that the use of the word "and" - "our Lord Jesus Christ, and God," proves that the Lord Jesus is a different being from God—the use of the same word "and" would prove that the "Father" is a different being from God. But the truth is, the apostle meant to speak of the Father and the Son as the common Source of the blessing for which he prayed.

[*Which hath loved us*] Referring particularly to the Father. The love which is referred to is that manifested in redemption, or which is shown us through Christ; see John 3:16; 1 John 4:9.

[*And hath given us everlasting consolation.*] Not temporary comfort, but that which will endure forever. The joys of religion are not like other joys. They soon fade away—they always terminate at death—they cease when trouble comes, when sickness invades the frame, when wealth or friends depart, when disappointment lowers, when the senses by age refuse to minister as they once did to our pleasures. The comforts of religion depend upon no such contingencies. They live through all these changes—attend us in sickness, poverty, bereavement, losses, and age; they are with us in death, and they are perpetual and unchanging beyond the grave.

[*And good hope through grace*] see Rom 5:2; Rom 5:5; Heb 6:19.

#### 2 Thess 2:17

[*Comfort your hearts;*] see 1 Thess 3:2; 1 Thess 5:11; 1 Thess 5:14. The Thessalonians were in the midst of trials, and Paul prayed that they might have the full consolations of their religion.

[*And establish you*] Make you firm and steadfast; 1 Thess 3:2,13.

[*In every good word and work*] In every true doctrine, and in the practice of every virtue.

### Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the major outlines came from reviewing the Scriptural Text.

Verse	Phrase	Major Outline
2	Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled	Triumph For Unshaken Believers
10	With all unrighteous deception among those who perish	Triumph In Spite of Deception
13	Because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification	Triumph For Chosen Believers

### Lesson Background

#### From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The technical word for the field of Bible study that deals with end-time prophecies is eschatology. Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament are used often as primary sources for information in this area. A number of Old Testament passages speak of the “day of the Lord” (examples: Isaiah 13:9; Ezekiel 30:3; Zephaniah 1:14). Many of these predict the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Babylonians (which happened in 586 BC), but there is often a sense of additional fulfillment beyond that catastrophic event. Jesus himself spoke of events associated with the end of time, particularly in the Olivet Discourse (also called the Apocalyptic Discourse) in Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13; and Luke 21. We can see in Jesus’ words certain predictions of the destruction of the temple in AD 70, but there are elements within the teaching that speak of the end of time as well. Jesus speaks of a period of great suffering that is followed by his own triumphant appearance (see Mark 13:24-26). This great period of suffering and persecution is often called the tribulation; some scholars identify this as a well-defined period in the future that necessarily precedes the coming of the Lord. Several places in the New Testament speak about one or more figures who are to personify evil and opposition to the kingdom of God (see Revelation 13:1, 11; 16:13; 1 John 2:18, 22; 2 John 7). Paul’s second letter to the church in Thessalonica, today’s study, also discusses a figure of evil. The letter of 2 Thessalonians begins with Paul offering support to Christians for the “persecutions and trials” they had been enduring (2 Thessalonians 1:4). Details of this persecution are not given. We can guess, however, that it may have involved pressure from the envious Jews of Acts 17:5, 13. They might have been upset with fellow Jews who had accepted Jesus as Messiah. The distress could have taken the form of social pressure, economic pressure, even physical intimidation (Acts 17:6).

#### Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

When studying the letters of the New Testament, it is always important to keep in mind that we are reading someone else’s mail. While we can understand many things that are stated or even implied, we are often at a loss to know the precise nature of the problems facing a particular congregation of God’s people. Since 1 Thessalonians frequently mentions the Lord’s coming, we can assume that these Christians were intrigued by this topic. Whatever questions or misunderstandings the Thessalonian brethren had, Paul attempted to address

them in his first epistle. But his readers came up with some new issues that the apostle had to address. Thinking that the second advent was just around the corner, so to speak, some of the Thessalonian believers had apparently stopped working and were simply waiting for the Lord's return (II Thess. 3:6-13). Important events have to occur prior to Christ's coming. That being so, it was premature for these saints to cease the normal activities related to making a living. Throughout history, and especially during difficult times, we are faced with this question: "Are we living in the times just before Jesus comes?" The Bible does not give us a date and time, but it does provide us with clues about the timing of that day. Most of all, it encourages us to be ready at all times because we do not know exactly when this will happen. We can stay strong because we have a hope in Jesus that is unwavering and will never let us down. We must be careful, however, to analyze all claims and predictions about the future in light of biblical teaching. In our lesson this week, we are challenged to stand firm in the hope we have in Jesus no matter what transpires before the Day of the Lord comes.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Triumph For Unshaken Believers (2 Thess 2:1-4)**

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,  
2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.  
3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,  
4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

### **Unshaken about the coming of Jesus (1-2)**

*Unshaken about the coming because redemption is drawing near (Luke 21:27-28)*

27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

*Unshaken about the coming because we live by faith (2 Cor 5:6-8)*

6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

*Unshaken about the coming because we have a living hope in it (1 Peter 1:3-5)*

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

*Unshaken about the coming because the Holy Spirit is our guarantee (Eph 1:13-14)*

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

## **Unshaken about the falling away (3-4)**

### *Falling away by abandoning the faith (1 Tim 4:1-3)*

1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

### *Falling away by not putting up with sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:3-4)*

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

### *Falling away because of being handed over to the deceiver (Dan 7:25)*

25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

### *Falling away because of being deceived (Mark 13:5-6)*

5 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many.

## **Triumph In Spite of Deception (2 Thess 2:8-12)**

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

## **Deception from the lawless one (8-10)**

### *The lawless one*

#### *Commentary from Barnes Notes*

"the lawless one," referring to the "man of sin," and called "the wicked one" because of the eminent depravity of the system of which he was to be the head; see 2 Thess 2:3.

#### *Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

Another great sign preceding the Lord's return will be the rise and revealing of a powerfully evil person, pictured as having a worldwide impact. He will set himself up as a false god, a rival to the Lord God himself. This is portrayed dramatically as the deceiver going so far as to occupy God's temple. About a decade prior to Paul's writing here, the mad Roman Emperor Caligula ordered a pagan statue to be erected in the Jerusalem temple. Naturally, this created a crisis in Judea. Some students think that Paul is evoking images of that notorious incident as a "type" or "foreshadowing" of something that will happen in the future: the use of idolatrous things to pollute the holy things reserved for God. Others take this imagery to be part of a prophetic drama that requires the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem sometime after its destruction in AD 70 (which destruction is less than 20 years in the future as Paul writes) and then be desecrated by the evil person whom Paul describes. Paul gives this evil person two descriptive titles. First, he is the *man of lawlessness*, which points to

someone who violates God's laws with impunity and arrogance. Second, Paul calls him the *man doomed to destruction*, meaning his future ruin is sure (compare Revelation 17:11). He will doubtlessly present himself like Paul's description of Satan as an "angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). He is not a man of victory or triumph, however, but one who will be defeated, judged, and condemned (see 2 Peter 3:7). Our lesson text skips over verses 5-7, but we should summarize what Paul says there: the person of evil being discussed is currently restrained. Yet there will come a time when this restraint is removed so that the final events may proceed in the plan of God. The removal of restraint on the lawless one allows him to be revealed, to be out in the open. This will be followed by the Lord's coming, which will bring down the man of lawlessness. The picture is one of instantaneous destruction. The glorious coming of the Lord will overpower any and all opposition. The result is Jesus' unquestioned reign (see Matthew 25:31). If the power of evil is still at work in the world—and it is—then the Lord's coming has not yet happened.

*A lawless one whom the saints will overcome (1 John 2:13)*

13 I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.

*A lawless one influenced Cain to kill Abel (1 John 3:12)*

12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

*A lawless one whom God keeps His saints safe from (1 John 5:18)*

18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

## **Deception through the delusion (11-12)**

*Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

On the surface, these two verses are very challenging, for Paul seems to be saying that the ultimate source of deception is God himself—that God causes some to believe the lie and thus be condemned. Yet we know that Satan, not God, is the great deceiver, the father of lies (John 8:44; compare 2 Corinthians 4:4). We also know that God doesn't tempt anyone with evil (James 1:13). How can we resolve the seeming contradiction? A good rule in Bible study is to note what the surrounding statements say. This keeps things in context. In this case, verses 10 and 12 both contrast truth with wickedness. It is impossible to love both truth and evil at the same time. Those who reject God's truth end up embracing the deceptive nature of the pleasures of lawless wickedness. This in turn opens these unbelievers to God's judgment since they have chosen to be deceived. They have already made up their minds. So when Paul says God sends them a powerful delusion, he may be using the same kind of "God gave them over" conclusion that he uses in Romans 1:24, 26, 28. What we are seeing, then, is a declaration of God's judgment.

*Commentary from Barnes Notes*

It is not necessary here to suppose that there was any positive influence on the part of God in causing this delusion to come upon them, but all the force of the language will be met, as well as the reasoning of the apostle, by supposing that God withdrew all restraint, and suffered men simply to show that they did not love the truth. God often places people in circumstances to develop their own nature, and it cannot be shown to be wrong that He should do so. If people have no love of the truth, and no desire to be saved, it is not improper that they should be allowed to manifest this. How it happened that they had no "love of the truth," is a different question, to which the remarks of the apostle do not appertain; see Rom 9:17-18; Rom 1:24.

*Delusions of enticement (1 Kings 22:19-22)*

19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. 20 And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. 21 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 " 'By what means?' the Lord asked. " 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. " 'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.'

*Delusions of anger (1 Sam 18:10-11)*

10 The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand 11 and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

### ***Triumph For Chosen Believers (2 Thess 2:13-17)***

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,  
14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.  
16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,  
17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

### **Chosen by Jesus (13-14)**

*Chosen by Jesus to bear fruit (John 15:16)*

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

*Chosen out of the world by Jesus (John 15:19)*

19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

*Chosen out of the days of distress and tribulation by Jesus (Mark 13:20)*

20 If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.

### **Chosen through teaching (15)**

*Teaching that ultimately came from Jesus (1 Cor 11:1-2)*

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.

*Teaching of the gospel (1 Cor 15:2)*

2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

*Teaching of trustworthy messages (Titus 1:9)*

9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

*Teaching of sound doctrine (2 Tim 1:13)*

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

*Teaching of Christ (2 John 1:9)*

9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

**Chosen to be comforted and established (16-17)**

*Comforted by the God of all comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4)*

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

*Comforted by the God who comforts the downcast (2 Cor 7:6)*

6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

*Established by the gospel (Rom 16:25)*

25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past,

*Established in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1:21)*

21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God,

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

John Stott describes Paul's scenario in 2 Thessalonians 2 as "Restraint, Rebellion & Reward." For a time, the power of evil is restrained by God. At some point, this restraint is removed, with the result of rebellion among those who reject God's truth. This is followed by just and sure rewards from God. The wicked are punished, and those who have embraced the hope of the gospel are gathered to begin eternity with their risen Lord. Throughout the history of the church, there have been those who have interpreted the events of their day as indicators of the Lord's soon return. This continues today. The modern interpreters may be as wrong as those of previous centuries, or they may be correct. Christ may return very soon, or he may delay for thousands of years. For believers, it does not matter. We have a blessed hope whether we live to see Christ return in power or are among the dead who are awakened by his call. We should have no fear of "the man of lawlessness," whoever he is, for we are among those who have washed our robes in the blood of the lamb. We will stand before God to worship and praise him forever (Revelation 7:14-17).

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

Often among new Christians, though not confined to them, we find an unquestioning embrace of whatever supposed Christian teachers espouse as biblical truth. Whether because they do not yet have a depth of understanding, or for other reasons, they can be easily diverted to a path different from that which is orthodox.

In this week's lesson, we are told that the Thessalonian believers, still new in the faith, encountered incorrect doctrine. They were having trouble sorting out the good from the bad. The Thessalonian believers were already in something of a quandary as to the timing of the Day of Christ. They apparently had had one or more reports, purportedly from Paul, that it had come; yet these reports did not seem to agree with what Paul had taught them earlier. They could not rationally make sense of it, and they were troubled about it. Paul reminded his readers of two events that had to happen before the Day of Christ. If they did not keep these in mind, their hope might be severely shaken. One of those "must" things was a great apostasy, or rebellion against God. The second was the revealing of the son of perdition, also known as the antichrist. It is probably safe to say that every Christian, whether new in the faith or a time-tested saint, has had his hope assailed when going through situations that are less than pleasant. "Why, God? Are You still there, God?" are questions that expose a hope under stress. We must remember that hope, like faith, will be tested. The antichrist will be empowered supernaturally and with great deceit will gather to himself those who hate the truth and love the lie. Sadly, those who embrace the lie will be confirmed in that condition; they will love unrighteousness more than God's truth. Do we not see in our own day God's truth being rejected more and more, to the extent that any Christian symbol or mention of God or the things of God is banned from classrooms, courthouses, and the public square? Do we not see acts of sin being more widely accepted and even taught as part of some public school curriculums? Current societal trends could be seen as preparing the way for end-time events. Though the Thessalonian believers were having difficulty processing what they were hearing from others in relation to what Paul had taught earlier, Paul still had great confidence that they would not jettison their hope for some other teaching. He was sure of their salvation and urged them to stand fast in what they had been taught by him, for therein lay their hope. He then committed them to God. There are many winds of false doctrine blowing across the contemporary landscape and, sadly, gaining a following. Too many are remaking God in their own image and thus sanctioning their own sin and rejecting God's truth. They want to determine truth by their own authority, but apart from coming to Christ they will perish. May God help all who know and love the truth to stand fast in these last days, even as hope is tested again and again.

### ***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

1. We can safely ignore false prophets of doom, for we have been given the truth of God (2 Thess. 2:1 -3)
2. Satan's counterfeit miracles will deceive only those who have refused to love the truth (vs. 9-10)
3. To delight in wickedness is to condemn oneself to delusion (vs. 11 -12)
4. Because we have been set apart for glory, we can stand firm in the truth (vs. 13-15)
5. Our encouragement comes not from spurious sources but directly from Christ Himself and the Father (vs. 16-17)