

# The Day of the Lord

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Preacher: Rev Gavino Fioretti

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Now, would you please stand with me in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2. I do not have one verse as foundation for my sermon tonight, but I would like to consider with you the portion that goes from verse 1 to verse 12.

2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, from verse 1 to verse 12. And what the Apostle Paul is dealing with in this portion is the second coming of Christ, or as he puts it, the day of the Lord.

That expression, the day of the Lord, it is very common in the Old Testament. If you read the prophets especially, you will find them referring to that day, that glorious, that terrible day of the Lord.

And what that day involves is, on one hand, judgment. It involves the coming of God to judge his enemies, but also to save his people.

And the Lord's Day, or not so much as the Sabbath day, but the day of the Lord, the day of his coming, the day when Jesus will come and defeat his enemies, and deliver his people, is an important subject.

[ 1 : 2 6 ] It's an important truth. The fact that it is in the Bible itself makes it very important. But also because, even in the days of the Apostle Paul, with the Apostles still alive and teaching, there were people who were teaching false things about that day.

They were saying that the day of the Lord had already come. Now, this could be understood in two ways. On one hand, that the day of Jesus, the resurrection, and all the things promised had already happened, and therefore the Thessalonians were left with this world and nothing else.

Or it might be that Paul is saying that what these people were teaching is that the day of the Lord was imminent, was going to come very quickly.

And so the Apostle Paul is correcting that wrong understanding. But the point is that for the Apostle Paul, it is important that the believers in Thessalonica have a right understanding of what the Bible says about the day of the Lord.

And I think, friends, that in our church, in our system, and in our theology, we don't give much time and much thought to the day of the Lord.

[ 2 : 5 0 ] We think about the work of the Holy Spirit, how much we need for the coming of the Holy Spirit to revive us, to quicken us, to save the people around us. We speak often of Jesus coming, visiting us, as we read His Word, as we meet for prayer.

We think of the first coming of Christ. We think of Jesus coming as a suffering servant to die for our sins. But we neglect the day of the Lord.

The day when the same Jesus who came to die will come to rule, to defeat, and to establish His kingdom.

We sometimes think, oh, it doesn't matter what people think about the day of the Lord. It is not important. It's a marginal thing. But the Apostle Paul doesn't consider that a marginal thing.

He is very concerned for the people. And he wants the people to know the truth about this. And he reminds them that he has taught these things already, when he was with them.

[ 4 : 0 4 ] It's not a marginal thing. It's an important thing. And so I think it is important for us to consider what the Apostle Paul says about this day.

And first thing, he reminds us the importance of knowing about that day. I mentioned that the Apostle Paul is concerned that the people of God might be deceived about this matter.

But notice, it's not just a theological concern. It's not just an academical concern the Apostle Paul has. It's a personal one. It's a pastoral concern. The idea, the teaching, that the day of the Lord has already come was shaking the mind of the people there.

It says that in verse 2. Not to be quickly shaken in mind. What happened? The people were moved to and fro by the teaching.

When Paul was there, they were listening to Paul. And they believed what Paul said. But then Paul goes away and some other people come. Or some other people write letters to them.

[ 5 : 26 ] Or some people within the congregation has a vision and speaks and says that the day of the Lord has already come. And the people of God instead of considering and examining dark things in the light of Scripture, they believe it.

And they are shaken in their mind. They are moved from one position to another one. They are not stable in what they believe. That's why it's so important that we listen carefully to what is taught. Remember the Apostle Paul praising the people in Berea for they examined the Scripture to see what Paul said was true.

the Thessalonians were listening to all kinds of teaching. They were not just allowing wrong teaching to be preached in their church.

They were listening to that teaching. They were believing that teaching and they were led astray from that teaching. And if we allow false teaching about the second coming of Christ, about the day of the Lord, we might find ourselves shaken in our mind, tossed to and fro from one doctrine to another one.

[ 6 : 52 ] No stability, no firmness, no standing on the truth. It is important that we know about this day because this is alarming.

Again, verse 2, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed. Now, if Jesus has already returned, what about us? Why are we not with Jesus?

Why are we still here? What about the hope of glory? What about the hope of heaven? Are we truly saved? Are we deceiving ourselves?

Or is this all that the Christian faith can promise to us? Is this world all we are? And all we are going to enjoy? The false teaching was not just simply moving them to believe what was wrong.

It was causing them to be concerned, to be alarmed, to be worried. And false teaching, friends, is alarming because it takes us away from the truth of God, from that foundation, from that freedom that is found in God's truth.

[ 8 : 10 ] The moment you abandon God's truth, everything becomes possible. And the apostle Paul is concerned and is saying to them, you are alarmed, you are shaken because you have forgotten the truth about this day.

You are being deceived by false teachers, by false teaching. And the devil doesn't want us to believe the truth.

He is a liar from the beginning. He doesn't want us to listen to God's word. He is constantly trying to mislead God's people away from God's truth.

He wants to distract us. He wants us to believe something else because he knows how much damage that will bring upon ourselves and upon the church of Jesus.

So it is important for us that we know the truth about the Lord's and his coming. It is not something for specialists, for theologians. It is something for us because if we neglect this truth we might find ourselves being moved from one place to another one, believing one day one thing and another day another things, alarmed, concerned, unsure, and above all deceived by the devil.

[ 9 : 36 ] It is important, friends, that we know about this day. But secondly, the apostle Paul reminds us about the beauty of that day.

why do I say this? Notice what he says in verse 1, now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him.

Paul is summarizing what the day of the Lord is all about. It is the day when Jesus comes.

it is the day when the Lord, the Savior, the Redeemer, the Son of God returns. It is the day when instead of seeing him by faith, we see him by sight.

It is the day when faith will be unnecessary because we're going to see him for whom he is. can you see how important this day is?

[ 10 : 45 ] If this day was about the Antichrist, if this day was all about the persecution of the church, it wasn't that important. But this day is so important because it is all about Jesus.

It's about the coming of the King. Now imagine if the Queen were to come and visit this community. Imagine if in April, the middle of April, you know the Queen was coming.

The whole community would be up in arms trying to prepare this place to make this place as beautiful as possible for the coming of the Queen. People would be dressing themselves at their best, they would be doing everything they can to meet the Queen.

That day would be signed on the calendar and everyone would talk about that day. And everyone would do his part for that day. You don't want to get wrong with the date.

You want to make sure that the day you have in your calendar is the day she is coming. Isn't this true about God?

[11:59] Isn't this true about Jesus' return? Yes, it's true. We don't have a day, date in the Bible when Jesus returns.

But we are told again and again that he is coming. That the King is coming. And we have to prepare the way for the Lord's coming. We have to be ready for the coming of the King.

And this is not just a threat, this is a privilege. meeting the Queen or some other authority would be a privilege. Yes, there is a responsibility.

You want to make sure all is perfectly done, but what a privilege to speak to Her Majesty. What a privilege for us when Jesus returns.

What a beautiful day. That day is going to be. The day when Jesus comes.

[13:08] The day we are all waiting for. The day every Christian longs for. The great wait is over.

When Jesus returns. Aren't you excited about that day? And of course there is an element of concern. standing before King Jesus, standing before him, we, hell-deserving sinners, we failing servants of Jesus, standing before him.

Yes, there is that element of concern. What a beautiful thought. What a wonderful truth. Jesus is coming.

coming. In Revelation you have the prayer of the church. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. And the more we are aware of the suffering, the misery, the vanity of this world, and the beauty of the world that is to come, the more we realize the peace, the prosperity, the joy, the life, the hope that Jesus will bring with his coming, the more excited we will be about that day.

He is coming. We don't know exactly when, but he is coming. and the Bible refers to our relationship with Jesus as the bride and the bridegroom.

[14:48] I don't know about you, but when I got married, I couldn't wait to see my wife. I was there waiting for her in the town hall, waiting, I couldn't wait to see her.

And that should be our expectation, friends. our longing, our desire for the coming of Jesus. It's a beautiful day, not just because Jesus returns, but also because we will be gathered together to him. It's not just that the king comes for a day, shakes a couple of hands, and then goes away. He comes, he gathers us, and he takes us home.

After so many years, away from him, after so many years, hearing about him, we're promised when he returns, he will gather us together with him.

We're going to see him, we're going to be with him. He has been preparing a place for us. the day is coming when that place is ready, and he will take us there.

[16:10] What a great day that day is going to be, when he will deliver us from this place, this world of sin, and misery, and death, to take us to a place of glory, and joy, unspeakable.

What a beautiful day. But is it true? When you think of that day, do you think of that day as a beautiful day?

Are you expecting, are you longing for that day? Are you preparing yourself for that day? a beautiful day, when Jesus returns.

But then Paul tells us that there are certain events that are going to precede that day. And there are mainly three events. One is the rebellion. In verse three, let not one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first.

the people were told that the Lord has already come. And Paul is saying, no, that's not true. There are certain events before Jesus returns.

[17:36] There are certain things that must happen before Jesus returns. And what is going to happen? Apostasy. That's the word in Greek, apostasy. It's not just the rebellion of the wicked world.

They're already rebelling against God. But this is something that's going to happen among the visible people of God. Among the visible church. People that claim to be Christian.

People that are brought up within the church will rebel against God. Those that for some time have pretended to be God's people, the hypocrites, the weeds, they will show themselves for what they are.

and after having so close to God, to God's kingdom and God's blessing, they will trample, they will destroy, will reject the Son of God.

So something is going to happen within the church. Something is going to happen among God's people. Churches, one's empty, one full will become empty.

[ 18 : 50 ] flourishing congregation will seem dead. Empty pews and unwillingness to listen and to surrender to God's will.

The apostasy has to come first. But another event that is going to precede the day of the Lord is the coming of the man of lawlessness.

the coming of the man of sin, the son of destruction, the coming of someone who is evil.

And that will lead people to reject God, to abandon God. Someone so evil that will proclaim himself to be God, that will sit, in the temple of God, that will claim divine authority and divine worship, that will lead the people to worship him.

A third event is the one who restrains the man of lawlessness. He says in verse 7, the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

[ 20 : 14 ] only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way and then the lawless one will be revealed. Now the spirit of lawlessness, this evil force, this evil power, was already at work in the days of the apostle Paul.

But there was something that was hindering that power to manifest itself. There was something hindering the man of lawlessness to come, to reveal himself, to claim to be God and to mislead people away from God.

Now you might ask, who are this figure? Who is the one who is hindering, who is stopping the man of sin to come and who is the man of sin?

Now there are various ideas about this. The church I come from, for example, in Sardinia, they believe that the man of sin is the Antichrist.

A political figure, maybe a Jew, that will sit in the temple of God, a literal temple of God, will expect the worship of men, who will claim to be God and will expect men to worship him.

[ 21 : 37 ] And the one who is hindering him from coming is the Holy Spirit. So they say the church will be raptured, so the Holy Spirit will go away, and therefore the Antichrist will have an open field to establish his kingdom on earth.

That is one interpretation. Another interpretation is that we are talking about the emperor, that the next emperor, Nero, or one of the emperors like him, was going to come and he is the man of lawlessness, is the man of sin.

He will persecute the church, he will expect the church to worship him. And it sounds possible because the Roman emperors expected the Christians to worship the emperor.

And many Christians died because they refused to say that Caesar is lord. No, no, Caesar is not lord, Jesus is lord. And so because of this many Christians were killed.

But I agree with the classical position of the reformed church, who is the man of lawlessness.

[ 23 : 02 ] people I believe with all my heart it is the pope or the papacy. Now, we're going to see more of this later on at the fellowship, but let me say one thing why I believe this.

Paul says he will proclaim himself to be God. Now, do you know some of the titles that the pope claimed for himself? he's called the holy father.

Sound familiar? He claims to be the head of the church. He calls himself the vicar of Christ or the representative of Christ on earth.

the holy father is one of the titles that God has in the bible. Jesus is the head of the church and the holy spirit represents Jesus on earth.

What is the pope saying? He's claiming to be the triune god on earth. He's claiming to be God. And who was hindering this system, this structure to be manifested?

[ 24 : 28 ] It was the Roman emperor. The Roman empire was holding this man of lawlessness to manifest himself. The moment Rome collapsed, the papacy could be established.

It is interesting that in the eastern part of the empire, where the emperor remained, the papacy did not exist. But where did collapse in the west part of the empire, the papacy became the main force.

And if we are to come to Italy, you will see what I mean. He's the man of lawlessness. His mystery was already at work in the days of Paul.

Paul, but once what was keeping him has been removed, he manifested himself for what he truly was. And other things that he says is that he will, he's part of this apostasy.

It's not just the result of the apostasy, he's also contributing to that rebellion. rebellion. And if there is one thing that is true about the papacy in the church of Rome, they are leading people away from the true God.

[ 25 : 56 ] These things have already happened. Rebellion is everywhere. The man of lawlessness has already come.

Jesus might come before you expect. It's an important day. It's a beautiful day. It's a day preceded by certain events.

But fourthly, I want you to notice there are two main characters involved or at work on that day. One is the devil. in verse 9, Paul says, the coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders.

For the man of lawlessness to claim to be God, he has to perform certain works that look the works of God.

So for him to persuade people that he is God, he needs a power that is at least similar to the power of God. Someone that resembles the power of God.

[ 27 : 13 ] And so this man of lawlessness will do great things by the activity of Satan. What the man of lawlessness is, is a puppet in the hands of the devil.

The one behind the man of sin is the devil. The devil uses him for his own purpose. Because remember that rebellion is what characterized the devil.

Satan means the enemy. And he will be leading the rebellion against God. he will be actively involved in deceiving men, in bringing, leading men away from the truth into error, into lies, into death.

death. The second character is God himself. In verse 11, therefore, God sends them a strong delusion.

On that day, God is active once and one way because he is coming. He is coming to gather his people, to bring them together, to take them to the places prepared for them.

[ 28 : 42 ] But he also comes and notices that what God does, he sends a strong delusion. Instead of God coming to persuade people away from error, into his marvelous light, God will allow these people, these sinful people, these rebellious people, the people that listen to the man of lawlessness, to be deluded.

There is a day when God stops being merciful. There is a day when God stops to give opportunities. There is a day for men when it's going to be too late.

That's a very serious, serious thing to say. Today, God is ready to save each and every one of us. Today, God is willing, in Christ, to be reconciled with us, to give us eternal life, to forgive us, to make us his children. But the day is coming when God will send a strong delusion, when God will stop being merciful, when God will stop persuading people and calling people to repentance, when God will say to sinners, do whatever you like, and see what happens.

A day, in a sense, when God gives up men to their own wicked ways. A day when God passes by sinners and leaves them in their own sin.

[ 30 : 28 ] Today, God sees sinful people like us, and he calls us, he in mercy delivers us from that condition. But the day is coming when God would leave us in that condition, when God will actively stop us from coming to him, when God will send a strong delusion, when God himself will make us to believe and the man of lawlessness and the man of sin and the devil himself.

We don't know when that day is, but that day is nearer than you and I think. We don't know the moment, but the day is coming when God will send a strong delusion, when God will pass you by if you're not a Christian, when God will say whatever, so be it, no more.

Paul tells us that today is the day of salvation. Today God is revealing his truth to you, for you to believe on that truth, for you to love that truth, for you to be saved.

If you don't believe that truth today, tomorrow, God might send a strong delusion that you may believe what is false.

And because you believe what is false, you may be condemned. That's what he says in verse 12, in order that all may be condemned.

[ 32 : 29 ] Today God is merciful. Today God is ready. Tomorrow could be too late. Now I don't know where you stand tonight.

I don't know if you are already a Christian or not. I don't know if you are saved or not. I don't know if you are believing the truth or rejecting the truth.

let me appeal to you. Don't hesitate. Do not delay. Don't be thinking, God, plenty time.

Because the same God that is willing to save you is the same God that will leave you into sin. That will pass you by and let you in sin.

the same God who is ready to save you tonight. If you reject his truth, if you don't believe the truth, it's the same one who will condemn you.

[ 33 : 36 ] What an important day that day is. But finally, the conclusion of that day. as the Lord returns, as he comes to gather his people with him, there are two things that he's going to do.

One, he's going to kill the lawless one. In verse 8, the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing.

as Jesus returns, the lawless one will come to nothing. The splendor of the glory of Jesus will destroy the lawless one.

The one who spoke so boldly of being God, the one who did wonders with the power of the devil will be destroyed by the coming of Christ.

But another thing will happen and that is the condemnation of all unbelievers. In order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

[ 35 : 07 ] God will condemn those who did not believe the truth. those who follow the man of sin, those who are no pleasure in righteousness, those who are delighted in sin, those who rejected the gospel, who said no to Christ, when Christ returned, all of them will be condemned.

Not one of them will be saved, not one of them will be spared, all of them. will be condemned. What a fearful day that is going to be.

And what we have to do, friends, is to make sure that we are ready. We don't know when he's coming, but he's coming.

and when he comes, he will destroy all his enemies. As he comes, all of us will stand before him as he sits on the judgment seat.

Each and every one of us will give an account of all that we have done in the flesh. If we're believing in him, to eternal life.

[ 36 : 36 ] if we have not believed in him, to eternal death. The day is coming. Jesus is coming. Are you ready?

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you for the promise that you are coming.

we thank you that on that day when you come, that you will gather us with you, that you will bring us home, that you will take us in the place you have prepared for us, a place of joy, of peace, a place where there is no more sin, no more tears, no more death.

we pray that all of us would be found on that day believing in Christ, believing in the truth, that we might not be condemned, but have eternal life.

we pray, Lord Jesus, that you would save us from all our sins, that you would cleanse us from all unrighteousness, that you would make us ready for that day.

[ 38 : 04 ] Hear us, for we ask all things in your name. Amen. Amen. Let us sing to God's praise in Psalm 98.

Psalm 98 at page 361. We sing from verse 5 to verse 9 with harp, with harp and voice of psalms, unto Jehovah sing, with trumpets, cornets, gladly sound, before the Lord the King.

Let seas and all their fullness roar, the world and dwellers there. Let floods clap hands and let the hills together joy declare. Before the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth can see.

He'll judge the world with righteousness, his folk with equity. These words to God's praise, with harp, with heart, and voice of psalms. psalms.

Amen. With harp, with harp, and voice of psalms, unto Jehovah sing, with trump, this hornet gladly sound before the Lord, the King.

[ 39 : 42 ] Let season and all their fullness roar, the world dweller said, let the slough hounds and let the hills together joy declare before the Lord because he comes to judge the earth comes he he will judge the world with righteousness his folk with equity the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all Amen. Amen.