

Confusion Over Christ Coming

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Pastor John Miller

I want to begin our study of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 by reading verses 1-3. Paul said, “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 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...”—or “the day of the Lord,” who is the same person, in the modern translations—“...had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day...”—that is, “the day of the Lord”—“...will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.”

I want to remind you why Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians so soon after penning 1 Thessalonians. First, he wrote to them to encourage them in their suffering. That’s covered in 2 Thessalonians 1. They were being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. They were baby Christians and were under persecution from the world, so they were discouraged and he wrote to them to encourage them.

Second, in chapter 2, our text, Paul is writing to enlighten them, because they were confused and disturbed as a result of deceptive teachers who had come in to lead them astray.

Third, in chapter 3, Paul was writing to exhort them in light of their carelessness and disobedience. They weren’t working; they were sluffing off, believing that the Lord was coming soon.

So Paul encouraged, enlightened and exhorted them in 2 Thessalonians. Now in chapter 2, we are dealing with enlightenment because of their confusion. Paul was seeking to enlighten those who were confused.

What were they confused about? Verse 2 of our text says, “...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.”

What had happened is that false teachers had come into the church and had told the believers in Thessalonica that they were in the tribulation period. They were told they missed the rapture—even though Paul told them they would be raptured and wouldn’t go through “the day of the Lord”—and were in the tribulation.

This is something that has gone on all through the church history. During different periods of time, Christians have believed that because of persecution, opposition and the sin of the culture around them, that they were in “the day of the Lord.”

This chapter jumps around in prophetic truth so is difficult to make clear. It’s not written in chronological order. Within these verses, Paul jumps back and forth in time. Basically Paul is

talking about eschatological events, what will happen in the future.

Paul is telling them that they are not in “the day of the Lord.” Certain things have to happen before they would be in “the day of the Lord.” So he is writing to educate them and encourage them. They don’t need to be shaken or troubled. Verse 2 says, “...not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us.”

False teachers were telling the believers that they were in “the day of the Lord.” Someone said, “Date setters are usually up setters.” I like that. People who set dates for end-time events are always upsetting the church, so the Thessalonians were “shaken in mind.”

The purpose of Bible prophecy is not for us to make a calendar, but it is so God can build in us a character. The Scriptures are taught so that we might look for the Lord to come, but not that we look for the signs and the things that are going on around us.

This chapter is very important, as far as Bible prophecy is concerned. Paul is telling us what happens before the tribulation begins. So we can sequentially, chronologically know from Scripture how it will transpire.

We don’t know when the rapture will take place. It’s imminent; nothing has to happen before the rapture. The rapture could happen before the end of my sermon. I would love to be preaching on the rapture when it happens. The Bible says, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” we will be “caught up” from pew to paradise. That would be awesome if it happened like that. We’ll be in the presence of the Lord. It could happen prophetically, Scripturally at any moment.

But there are always those people who come along and say, “No; we’re in the tribulation period. No; the Antichrist is here. Be careful; that’s the mark of the beast.” So we need to understand how it will all unfold for us.

Also, the verses in our text, along with 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, support, if not clearly teach, a pretribulation rapture. That means that before the seven years of tribulation and before the revelation of the Antichrist, the church will be “caught up” in the rapture.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, we covered the passages on the rapture of the church. Then in chapter 5, we learned that Paul have no need to write to them about the times and the seasons, because they knew that “the day of the Lord...”—same phrase used in our text—“...will come as a thief in the night.” Then they will say, “Peace and safety! Then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.” Then Paul said, “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness...For God did not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” These verses are teaching a pretribulation rapture.

And the verses of our text support that teaching. Why would the Thessalonians be “shaken” and “troubled,” verse 2? The reason is because these false teachers were telling them that

Paul was wrong about the rapture, that they had missed the rapture—even though it hadn't happened yet—and they were in “the day of the Lord.” The believers wouldn't have been shaken if they expected the rapture to be in the middle of the tribulation. And they wouldn't have been shaken if they expected the rapture to be at the end of the tribulation. So they were shaken and upset, because they expected a pretribulation rapture. That's the whole reason they were upset. It only makes sense. So Paul is writing to assure them that certain things have to happen before “the day of the Lord” takes place.

In verse 1 of the King James translation, it says, “Now we beseech you, brethren.” The word “beseech” means “to humbly request” of them. Paul is begging them on his knees. He continues, “...by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.” I believe this is talking about the rapture of the church. That is when the Lord comes and gathers us together with Him.

In John 14:1-3, Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house...”—which is “heaven”—“...are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” Jesus promised to come to take us to the Father's house. This is “our gathering together unto him.” We also looked at that in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. And 1 Thessalonians 5 tells us it will happen before the tribulation.

So the problem was, in verses 2-3, that someone had come into the church and told them otherwise. How it happened was that they were “shaken in mind,” which means “mentally disturbed or upset.” They were “not to be...troubled [emotionally] either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us.” Somebody had stood up in the congregation, and supposedly being led by the Holy Spirit, had prophesied saying, “Thus saith the Lord, we are in the tribulation.”

Be careful when somebody does that; whenever there is a “prophet” supposedly speaking “in the Spirit” and they contradict the clear teaching of the Word. The authority is the Word of God, not some so-called “prophet.” The authority is the objective truth in God's Word. Any prophetic word in spirit must be examined and tested by the Word. That is the court of appeal, the authority.

Years ago when I was pastoring in a church before Revival, someone stood up in a service and said, “Thus saith the Lord, Ronald Reagan is the Antichrist.” I don't think so. So we need to go to the Bible to find the truth in God's Word.

I have false prophets show up at our church. They say, “I'm Moses. I want to speak to your church.” Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah and Isaiah have all been here. I tell them that “We're a “non-prophet organization. No thank you.” Instead we have the Bible, God's Word. I believe that God can speak through an individual, but it must be consistent with the Word of God. Whatever someone says by the Spirit must be examined as to being either true or false by the Bible.

Also, in verse 2, Paul says “not to be soon shaken...by word.” Someone said, “Well, Paul told me that we are in ‘the day of the Lord.’” They’re also not to be “shaken...by letter.” Someone signed Paul’s name to a letter that was supposedly from Paul and the other apostles.

So these people were prophesying, passing the word on and falsified a letter that said they were in “the day of the Lord.” They were saying that we’re already in the tribulation.

Many times Christians have thought they were in the tribulation because of World War I, World War II, Adolph Hitler, all the different people who were thought to be the Antichrist and all the stuff about the vaccination and “the mark of the beast.” We’re not in the tribulation. If you think this is bad, it’s going to get a lot worse. But we’ll be “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air.” The church will not be here for this time of tribulation.

What is “the day of the Lord”? It is not a single day, a 24-hour day, but it is a period of time. It begins with the revelation of the Antichrist after the rapture and runs through to the end of the millennium. It includes the seven years of tribulation and the 1,000 years of the millennial reign. That is “the day of the Lord.” There are multiple Old Testament passages, as well as New Testament passages, that describe this period of time known as “the day of the Lord.”

There are two events that must happen, in verse 3, before “the day of the Lord” comes. “The falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.” First, there will be a “falling away,” which is the Greek word “apostasias,” and it is transliterated in English as “apostasy.” It means “to depart.” In the New Testament, it means a departure from the faith. They profess to be Christians, but then they turn their back on God, on Christian doctrine, on the Christian belief. They apostatize or depart from the Christian faith. This is a sign that we will be entering into the tribulation. And the second sign is that a “man of sin” will be revealed, “the son of perdition.” That is a reference to the Antichrist.

So to be in the tribulation, there has to be a “falling away.” And I believe it happens before the rapture, and it intensifies and culminates in the tribulation period. And there also has to be the revealing of the Antichrist, “the son of man...the son of perdition.”

What I want to do with our text is to break it down logically and chronologically following the prophetic events that make for God’s timetable. It’s a challenge to do, because these events jump around in this chapter, and they relate to deep, prophetic truths. You have to tie in Daniel, Revelation and Matthew 24, which is the Olivet Discourse, to bring it all together.

I want to give you four things that will happen before Christ’s Second Coming. Number one is “the falling away” or an apostasy. Verse 3 says, “That Day...” —“the day of the Lord”—“...will not come unless the falling away comes first.” So this is not just a general apostasy but the great apostasy. I believe that one of the signs that the church is living at the end of time is that those who once professed the true faith of Christianity have turned their backs and have “fallen away” from orthodox Christianity. This is a departing from the faith. The word “apostasy” literally means “a departure.”

In the years I have been pastoring, I have noticed a continual slide of the mainline denominations and even independent Bible churches and so-called evangelical churches. They're not believing the Bible is the infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God. They're not believing we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. They're not believing that Christ will come again. They're denying "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." They take out all the miracles and the supernatural in the Bible.

It's basically liberalism, or in modern clothes called "postmodernism" or "progressive Christianity." They claim to be Christians, but they don't believe in the supernatural. They don't believe you have to be born again to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus told Nicodemus, in John 3:3, that unless he "is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." So it is a liberal, postmodern, progressive Christianity. And it has progressively gotten worse.

We pray for and hope there will be a great outpouring of God's Spirit in a revival in the last days. But it's not guaranteed in the Bible. What is guaranteed in the Bible is that many who claim to be Christians will actually fall away or "depart from the faith."

Let me give you some verses about that. In 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul says, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." 2 Timothy 3:1 says, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come." Then in verse 5 it says, "...having a form of godliness but denying its power."

So they look like Christians, they talk like Christians and they may even act like Christians, but they're not really Christians. They're "tares among the wheat."

In Peter's second epistle, he talked about apostasy. In 2 Peter 2 and 3, he said it was like a dog that goes back to its own vomit. It's like a pig that has been washed but goes back to wallowing in the mire. This is an indication that they weren't real Christians to begin with. They just came out of the world, were attracted to Christianity but were never regenerated or born again, so they just turned away from the faith. They were like a dog or a pig but not a sheep.

The entire book of Jude, one chapter, is about apostasy. Jude talks about "the angels who did not keep their proper domain...He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day." But God says to genuine believers, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" until that day.

It's interesting that Jude 3 says that we should "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." The Bible is the Word of God. There is one God in three Persons. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He was born of a virgin, but postmodernists deny the virgin birth. They deny the Incarnation. They deny His sinless life. They deny His substitutionary death. They deny His bodily, physical Resurrection and His Ascension into heaven. They deny His Second Coming. All they do is deny these essential truths of Christianity. It's a sign of the times that the church has slipped away from the orthodox,

Christian doctrine.

So you need to know what you believe and why you believe it, and then “contend...for the faith...delivered to the saints.”

I happen to believe that one of the problems in the United States today is that the church has turned away from God, and we haven't affected the culture as salt and light as we should. What is really to blame for the moral decline in America today is the church. It's because we're not salt and light. And I believe that the reason the church is weak, inept, anemic, dead and is only a professing church is because the pulpits are weak. This is why Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.” And this is how you preach the Word: “Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” or “doctrine.” That's the problem: we're not preaching doctrinal sermons.

Then Paul tells Timothy why he should do this: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they...”—“the people”—“... have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” Then Paul told Timothy to “be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” So Timothy was to keep on course, keep preaching the Word, even if people didn't want the preaching of the Word.

One of the problems in the church today is pragmatism. Pastors have abandoned preaching the Word for practical, pragmatic reasons of growing their church. They focus on what grows the church, not on what God wants them to do in faithfully proclaiming God's Word. Let God build the church, and be faithful to preach His Word, just as Paul said.

So the first thing that happens before Christ comes again is that there will be a falling away. The second thing that happens is implied and taught in the text, but it's not sequential. It is the rapture of the church and the restrainer is removed. It's in verse 1: “...the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him”; and in verses 6-7: “And now you know what is restraining, that he...”—“the Antichrist”—“...may be revealed in his own time.” There is something holding back the Antichrist.

This is a bit of a challenge, because at the end of verse 3, we have “the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.” That's the Antichrist. But he cannot be revealed until the church is raptured when the Holy Spirit takes the church to heaven, removes the restraining force and allows the Antichrist to be revealed. Verse 6 says the Antichrist is being held back.

Many pastors theorize that the Antichrist is alive and in the world right now. Maybe. Maybe not. It's just speculation; we have no way of knowing that. Years ago there was an article in The Los Angeles Times that said the Antichrist was here and living in London in an apartment. I don't think so. Probably living in San Francisco would be more like it.

But the church is not looking for the Antichrist; we're looking for Jesus Christ. And even though Paul told the Thessalonians that, they were confused. The reason they were shaken and

troubled was because they weren't doing what Paul told them to do: "Look for Jesus Christ. Keep your eyes fixed on Him." Yes, the world's getting darker. There's a lot of apostasy and falling away going on in the church. Yes, things are getting darker. But we're looking for Jesus Christ, not the Antichrist.

So for the Antichrist to be revealed, the rapture must come first and the Holy Spirit pulls back His restraining force. That supports a pretribulation rapture. It's only common sense in Scripture.

Now notice verse 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." This is talking about a hindering force that is taken out of the way in order for the Antichrist to be revealed.

So this is how I think it goes down. We see the general falling away from the faith, and the rapture happens. If the church is "the light of the world," when the church is gone the world will get very dark. The Old Testament says that "the day of the Lord" is "a day of darkness...and thick darkness." If the true church is "the salt of the earth," and it gets raptured and "caught up," the world gets corrupt.

One of the reasons why the world is getting so corrupt now is that the church is not being "salt and light." But when the church is taken out, the flood gates will be opened and the Antichrist will be revealed, this "man of sin," this "son of perdition." Then the world will get very, very dark.

We have no way of knowing if the Antichrist is alive today. I don't care if he is or isn't, because I'm looking for Jesus Christ. And I know that God is sitting on the throne, and it's all going to go down the way He has laid out in His Word. We can rest assured of that. We can put our faith in God and trust Him.

So the second thing is the rapture of the church and the Holy Spirit is removed. The Holy Spirit works through the church and will be here during the tribulation, because He is omnipresent. But He won't be here in the same way that He is here now in the church age. That time will be kind of a reversal of Pentecost. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell; the church, the body of Christ, was born; and we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us as believers. Even corporately, the church is the habitation of God through the Holy Spirit. But when the church is taken out, the Spirit will pull back His restraining force, evil will have a heyday and darkness will enshroud this world.

The third thing that will happen is the Antichrist is then revealed, verses 3-5. So the church has been raptured, the restrainer is removed and the Antichrist is revealed. Not only is there "the falling away," somewhere in between there is the rapture of the church and the restrainer is removed. Then "the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition."

This is a reference to the person we most often refer to as "the Antichrist." But the Bible has another whole myriad of titles for him. Rarely in Scripture is he called the Antichrist. But it is used in 1 John 4:3. In our text the Antichrist is called "the man of sin...the son of perdition." Some translations call him "the lawless one." He will come to take control of the world.

Isn't it interesting that we see lawlessness in America like never before. What a tragedy that is for our culture.

He's also called "the son of perdition." There is only one other person in the Bible who is given that title. It's Judas Iscariot. That's a scary thought.

The Antichrist's perdition or his destruction doesn't mean annihilation. He'll be thrown into hell by Jesus at the Second Coming, but he will not be destroyed. Rather he will be punished forever.

In verse 8 of our text, he is called "that Wicked," in the King James translation. In Daniel 7 and 9, he is called "the little horn." Out of the ten horns comes "the little horn," who is the Antichrist. It's out of a revived Roman Empire. He's called "the prince that will come."

In Revelation 13, in the whole chapter, it graphically describes the reign of "a beast rising up out of the sea." He is the Antichrist.

The only other place is in 1 John 4:3 where he is given the title "Antichrist." There it is used in the sense of people who are teaching false doctrine about Jesus Christ. There John says, "Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming." So it is false doctrine or false teaching that denies the true person of Jesus Christ.

So this term "Antichrist" has been transferred to this "man of sin," this "son of perdition," this "lawless one," this "little horn," this "prince that will come."

In Revelation 13 it says, "He was given a mouth speaking great things." It is believed he will have great oratory ability. I call him "Mr. Big Mouth." That reminds me of a lot of politicians today.

And it isn't hard to believe that we are living in a world that is focusing on globalism and has been for so long. One man, Satan's man, will come on the scene and take control of the whole world. This is that "man of sin."

And some believe that the same demon that possessed Judas Iscariot will possess the Antichrist. That's only a theory but it's interesting. What a wicked man he will be.

What does the word "Antichrist" mean? It means two things. It means "instead of Christ"; people will think he's the savior, the messiah, but he's not. They think he comes instead of Christ. And it also means that he will oppose Christ.

The Antichrist will come as a peacemaker. In Revelation 6, he comes on a white horse, and he has a bow but no arrows. In Daniel 9, it says he makes a covenant with Israel for seven years. That will be the beginning of "the day of the Lord." It starts with the revelation of the Antichrist and the covenant made for seven years. It's the 70th week of Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy. All

that has already happened has taken place in 183 years, but there are 7 years left. And that will be the great tribulation.

But the Antichrist will also be a peace breaker. That is described in verses 4-5 of our text. Paul says that the Antichrist “opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God...”—so he is against God, against Christ—“...or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?” Satan has always wanted to be worshipped as God, and it's going to happen in the person of the Antichrist.

This is also described in Daniel 9:27 and is called “the abomination of desolation” in Daniel 12:11. And Jesus predicted it in Matthew 24:15. He said, “You [will] see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holy place.” It's also referred to in Revelation 13 when the Jews, in the covenant made with the Antichrist, will be able to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and after three-and-a-half years of peace, “then sudden destruction comes upon them,” he erects an image of himself in this rebuilt temple and commands everyone to worship him as God. And if you don't worship him, if you don't take a mark on your right hand or on your forehead, which is “the number of the beast,” 666, then you'll be put to death.

Is it so farfetched that we don't think the world will get to that stage? We see that the stage is almost set today.

So you have to have this identifying mark, you have to worship the Antichrist as God or you can't buy or sell anything. What a scary thought that is. He is a peacemaker but then he becomes a peace breaker.

The fourth thing that will happen, in sequential order—and it's in our text—is that Jesus Christ returns. So in sequence, there is a falling away, the church is raptured and the restrainer is removed, the Antichrist is revealed and then Jesus Christ returns from heaven. Verse 8 says, “And then the lawless one...”—referring to the Antichrist—“...will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” That's referring to Jesus' Second Coming. So when Jesus comes back, He will destroy the Antichrist.

This event is also so clearly described in Revelation 1 and 19. Jesus' “head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass...Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,” Revelation 1:14-16. He is coming to judge the world and the Antichrist. Jesus Christ is coming again.

Verse 9 says, “The coming of the lawless one...”—“the Antichrist,” who will be destroyed—“...is according to the working of Satan...”—he's Satanically empowered—“...with all power, signs, and lying wonders.” Miracles are no indication that a man or woman is from God.

Continuing, “...and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish...”—why did they

perish?—"...because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them..."—or "allow them"—"...strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

There is so much in these verses, but let me reduce it to two things. When Jesus comes back, He will judge and destroy the Antichrist and his false prophet, verses 8-9. How does He do it? "With the brightness of His coming." With the sword that comes out of His mouth. What a day that will be!

When you look at this world and all its sin and evil, how we yearn for and long for the coming again of Jesus Christ. It will happen. In verses 10-12, it says He will bring judgment on the unsaved, on the unbelieving world. They are deceived by Satan and the Antichrist, and they "perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved," verse 10.

God is not to be blamed for the judgment that comes on them. They don't receive "the truth," and they don't have the love of God in their hearts.

Notice also that God allows them, verse 11, to be deluded, "that they should believe the lie." What is the lie? That Satan is God. It's the lie that Satan promulgated in the Garden of Eden. Satan has always wanted to be worshipped. And he will be through the Antichrist.

There are only two ways you can go: you either believe the truth, or you believe the lie. There is no third option. There's no "in the middle." You either reject the truth and Jesus Christ and believe a lie, or you believe the truth in Jesus Christ. There is no neutrality.

The same is true for you and me today. Verse 10 says, "They did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." And they are damned, because they "did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Here is my question to you: Are you saved? Have you been born again? Do you believe the truth and love the truth and cling to the truth? You either believe the truth, or you believe the lie. There's no neutrality.

But there is a theory that I bring up as a warning. Some feel—and it's possible—that it's very likely that those who reject Jesus Christ right now will be those who God will allow to have "strong delusion" after the rapture. They won't believe the truth and be saved.

"Are you telling me, Pastor John, that people won't be saved after the rapture?" No, they'll be saved. But if you reject the truth right now and believe the lie, what makes you think you're going to believe the truth, accept Jesus Christ and reject the lie when the church is gone, the Holy Spirit is pulled back and the Antichrist is here? You'll be put to death if you believe in Jesus Christ then.

Truth or lie. You are really playing with eternity to reject the truth right now while the Holy Spirit

is here, the church is here, the support of the church is here. You can believe the truth and be saved. If you can't live for Jesus now, what makes you think you're going to live for Jesus then?

So I wouldn't play around. I wouldn't waste time. I would get saved right now. The Bible says, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." It also says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

The world's going to get darker and darker. The Jewish day begins not at sunrise but at sunset. So the dawning of the new day starts with darkness. Until Christ returns and brings in everlasting light, the world is only going to get darker, more sinful, more wicked and more evil. The Bible says, "Evil men and imposters will grow worse, deceiving and being deceived."

So if you aren't saved, if you're not born again, if you don't know whether or not you'll go to heaven when you die, it behooves you to get right with God right now.

If God has spoken to you through this message today, and you're not sure you're a child of God—maybe you don't know that if you died today, you would go to heaven, you've never really trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—I would like to lead you in a prayer right now inviting Christ to come into your heart and to be your Savior.

So as I pray this prayer, I want you to repeat it out loud, right where you are, after me. Make it from your heart, inviting Christ to come in and be your Lord and Savior. Let's pray.

"Dear Lord Jesus, I'm sorry for my sin. I pray that You'll forgive me and come into my heart and make me Your child. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and help me to live for you all the days of my life. I believe in You. I receive You as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer and you meant it, God heard that prayer and God will and does forgive your sins.

We'd like to help you get started growing in your walk and relationship with Jesus Christ. God bless you.

If you just prayed with Pastor John to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, we are so excited for you, and we'd like to send you a Bible and some resources to get you started in your relationship with the Lord. Simply click on the Contact link at the top of the page and tell us something like, "I prayed to accept Christ." We'll get your Bible and resources mailed out to you right away.

God bless you and welcome to the family of God.