

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 38 (September 16-22, 2018)

What would happen if God removed the Holy Spirit from the earth? (Believe me, you do not want to be there!) We will study that question this week.

Sunday, September 16 (read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him . . . (2 Thessalonians 2:1a)

Two separate events are referenced in the printed verse above: 1) The rapture of the Church, and 2) The second coming of the Lord. In between these two events, a period of seven years known as the tribulation will take place on earth. Jesus has promised to gather His children to Himself prior to the Great Tribulation (see John 14:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-58). In today's text, Paul is assuring the Christians in Thessalonica that they have not missed the rapture. They are suffering persecution that they **thought** would not come prior to the rule of the antichrist on earth. Someone had written a fake letter in Paul's name alarming the Christians by saying they had missed the anticipated event. No true believer will miss the gathering of our Lord! Paul will explain this in more detail in the rest of this chapter.

Monday, September 17 (reread 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

We are certainly living in a time of rebellion and lawlessness spoken of by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter (Isaiah 5:20). During a time such as this, people will seek a leader who changes all the natural laws and replaces them with laws made to satisfy the evil desires of the flesh. Ultimately, a worldwide leader known as the antichrist (1 John 2:18-23) or the beast (Revelation 13:1-10) will emerge on the scene. I believe America and the world are ready for such a godless leader. Even now, under the language of political correctness, nations are trying to form a one-world global government. Can the rapture of the Church be far away? More importantly, are you ready for the Lord to call you home?

Tuesday, September 18 (reread 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The spirit (beliefs) of the antichrist has already set itself up in God's new temple, our bodies. That's why our nation has abortion on demand, gay marriage, the transgendered, co-ed bathrooms and showers, etc. Each perverted class of people demands equal rights under the permissive rules of this new society while the church of Jesus Christ either accepts these lifestyles or remains strangely silent on God's truth. Likewise, during the tribulation, the antichrist will set himself up in God's newly built temple in Jerusalem, "proclaiming himself to be God" (v. 4). Look around and ask yourself this question: "Is the world ready to receive such a leader?" Are you doing all that you can to introduce Jesus to your lost friends?

Wednesday, September 19 (read 2 Thessalonians 2:5-8)

For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the One who now holds it back will continue to do so till He is taken out of the way. (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

Christians are the “light of the world” and “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13-14) during the current Church Age (also known as the Day of Grace). As we fulfill our roles, the Spirit living within us holds back some of the forces of evil (v. 7). If you think the world is bad now, imagine what it would be like if we were not here. That’s exactly what will happen during the tribulation. God’s Spirit goes with us when we are caught up into heaven to meet the Lord in the air, leaving behind a godless society with no Christian influence. This society will elect a leader (the antichrist) to explain away the rapture of the Church. You don’t want any of your loved ones to have to go through this. Witness to them now while you have time!

Thursday, September 20 (read 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10a)

God operates in the realm of **faith** (see Hebrews 11:1-6) while Satan reveals his power through **sight** and **sound**. During the tribulation, the devil will deceive his global citizens with a display of “counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders” (v. 9). I believe that the “made for TV” miracles are a preview of coming attractions. Don’t get me wrong: I know that God can still heal the body just as He did when Jesus walked on earth, but I don’t believe preachers should use His healings as a pathway to personal wealth. If these preachers have a “gift” of healing, let them go into the children’s rehab centers and heal those kids who have no money to give them. Do not allow yourself to be deceived by “miracle workers” during these days of greed and self-indulgence. Trust in the One who can heal the body **and** the soul!

Friday, September 21 (reread 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. (2 Thessalonians 2:10b -12)

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6b). All who reject the truth of those two verses will believe the lie of Satan, “because they refused to love the truth and so be saved” (v. 10b). God sends His **truth** to act as a shield against the **lie** that follows. When anyone rejects the truth, the shield of faith comes down and the lie of the devil marches in. Since Satan can do nothing without God’s permission, it is the Lord Himself who allows the lie to come to the rejecters of His truth (v. 11-12). Believe and accept God’s truth while we live in the Day of Grace!

Saturday, September 22 (read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-16)

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Some of the material in this week’s studies may be frightening; therefore, I am closing with the positive verses that take all fears away. God’s plan has **always** been to save fallen mankind through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, followed by the earthly ministry of the Holy Spirit (v. 13). Those who have received the truth of the gospel only need to stand firm in their faith during these difficult days leading up to the rapture and the tribulation (v. 14-15). The entire Trinity is still here to encourage you and to strengthen you. Can you **trust** in the unseen God even while you observe the powers of darkness? You’ll be glad you did when you stand in the Presence of the One who died so that you may live forever in heaven.