

# 2 Thessalonians 2 • Concerning the Coming of Our Lord Jesus

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*“<sup>1</sup> Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup> not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. <sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*

*<sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup> And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. <sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. <sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. <sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,*

*<sup>10</sup> and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. <sup>11</sup> Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, <sup>12</sup> in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. <sup>13</sup> But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*

*<sup>14</sup> To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. <sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.” (ESV)*

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the wonderful Word that you have preserved for us here in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. I just pray that the ministry of this Word would reach every heart and every situation. Lord, you know all these people and you know what their needs are. You know what they need to hear. You know, Lord, what is necessary that their hearts might be encouraged and they leave this place today built up and fed. And I pray, my Father, that you would do that. I ask you to speak clearly, minister grace, guide us we pray into all truth, for we ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

You might recall that in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he wrote to them about that event that kicks off the Day of the Lord, and that is the rapture of the church. Do you remember we talked about that through 1 Thessalonians? The rapture of the church is that catching away of the bride, where Paul refers to Jesus coming in the clouds to receive the body. He says (**referring to 1 Thessalonians 4:17 ESV**), and we will be caught up together with him in the air. And so, the rapture of the church is a thoroughly biblical doctrine, and it kicks off, once again, that timeframe of the Day of the Lord.

Remember, we talked about the fact that the Day of the Lord is not just a day. It is actually a protracted period of time that lasts for years but it is referred to biblically as, the Day of the Lord. Now, the Apostle Paul, even though he had only spent a short time with the Thessalonians, had actually taught them quite a bit about these last day's events.

He told them about the rapture of the church and then he told them that after the rapture of the church would come the Great Tribulation, which is a seven-year period of time, during which God will pour out His wrath upon the earth. Here's what was happening though in Thessalonica. The church was going through great persecution, great difficulty, many, many problems, very painful, difficult situations.

And the believers there in Thessalonica began to conclude, I guess is the best way to put it, that they had actually missed the Rapture and they now found themselves in the midst of the Great Tribulation. They actually started to believe it, for whatever reason. In other words, they were convinced that the Day of the Lord had already commenced and they had been left behind.

What a terrible thing. Now the fact of the matter is, there will be people who will be left behind. And many of them who had heard the gospel, but never responded, or who had perhaps even been raised in a Christian home, but never bowed their knee to Christ will, in fact, be left behind; but many of those people, in fact, hundreds of thousands of those people during the Great

Tribulation will come to know Christ as their Savior. We call them the Tribulation Saints.

Many people are going to come to the Lord during the Great Tribulation. We'll talk about that in just a bit, but believers who are in Christ will not go into the Great Tribulation because those who are alive on the earth at that time will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, which begins the Day of the Lord.

So, Paul begins to speak to the believers about this idea of them being left behind and now being in the midst of the Great Tribulation. He begins in verse 2, if you look with me there, he says, *"<sup>1</sup> Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup> not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has (had commenced and you missed it) come ."*

So he said, I don't want you to be shaken by this idea that the Day of the Lord already happened and you somehow didn't get included. Paul tells them here that there's no way they could have missed the rapture of the church and the reason he does that is he begins to speak about the things that are going to happen during the Great Tribulation and he's going to convince them those things haven't happened, so you know you're not in the Great Tribulation.

So, if you wanted to title this message, maybe you're taking notes. It's something like, How I Know I'm Not in the Great Tribulation. Okay. Something like that. So here we go. Beginning in verse 3, he starts to outline some of the ways we know we're not in the Great Tribulation. He says in verse 3, *"<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first,..."*

I want you to stop there for just a moment because this word rebellion might be translated differently if you have a different Bible translation on your lap or in your hand. Your Bible may say, (referring Amplified Bible version) *"unless the apostasy comes first,..."* and the reason the word apostasy is put there is because the Greek word is actually, that basic word. It is that word that we translate literally, apostasy.

It is pronounced something like apostasia (ap-os-tas-ee'-ah) in the Greek but that has caused people to assume that the apostasy, or the falling or the rebellion, that Paul is referring to here is related to the church. In other words, there's a lot of people who interpret this idea to be that there will be a great

falling away of the body of Christ prior to the coming, or as the beginning, of the Day of the Lord.

And then you'll notice that he says there's another reason that we know that you're not in the Great Tribulation, and that is (paraphrasing) that the man of lawlessness has not been revealed. He calls him the, he's talking about the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, or the son of destruction. (ESV text reads *“and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,”*)

I want to take a look at both of these if I could just for a moment. First of all, this idea of this coming rebellion. So, knowing that you do...that a lot of people interpret this somewhat differently. I'm going to have to tell you that I don't personally believe that this rebellion or apostasy has anything to do with the church.

I believe that this is actually the attitude of the world, once the church has been removed from the scene. Because we know that Christ comes for his bride, he receives his church, and the church is removed from the world. What is he removing? Well, he calls us the light of the world and the salt of the earth, does he not? (referring to **Matthew 5:13-14** ESV)

What does light and salt do? Well everybody knows, whoever has flipped a light switch, we know that it illuminates the darkness and that's one of the things you and I are called to do as the body of Christ, but we're also to be the salt of the earth. We don't realize this today as much but salt back in biblical times wasn't as much used for flavoring, although it was, but it was used mostly as a preserving agent.

Salt was used to treat cuts of meat so that they wouldn't decay. I learned this when I was a little boy. I used to trap gophers with my buddies and we'd take them down to City Hall and we'd turn them into this poor lady that worked out at City Hall, who had to receive all these gopher feet, and we'd carry them in there in a jar filled with salt and it was to keep the decay process at bay. Poor lady, I don't know what she did with all those but she gave us like 35 cents, I think, for the hind feet of a gopher. It was the city's way of trying to reduce the gopher population, I guess.

It's, yeah, anyway, you never know what those Midwesterners are figuring, thinking. Anyway, so I learned even as a kid that salt preserves and that's part of what we're doing as the body of Christ. Listen, I know you watch the news, you look at the world, and you're probably thinking to yourself, I don't think we're

doing very good, as far as projecting the light and preserving and keeping decay at bay.

And I'll grant you, it probably looks like we're fighting a losing battle but let me ask you something, once Jesus comes for His church once He catches away His bride and all the believers are gone, who do you think is going to speak up about sexual immorality? When all the believers are suddenly taken away, who do you think is going to object to the abortion of unborn babies?

When all the believers have been taken and they're all gone, who do you think is going to object and work against the slave trade? And let me ask you this, when all the believers have been taken to meet the Lord in the air, who do you think is going to rally people in Washington, D.C. to the number of 100,000 souls to cry out and intercede for this country?

There isn't going to be anybody to do that. They're going to be taken away and when they are taken away, that which the Holy Spirit has called you and I to be and to do in this world is going to be taken with us. That salt and that light is going to be taken away. And I believe that that is what Paul is talking about when he says, “<sup>3</sup> ...*the rebellion comes...*,” there is going to be a wholesale turning away from any sort of biblical principles or godly values in this world when the believers are gone.

Now the second reason Paul reminds them they couldn't possibly be in the Great Tribulation, as we mentioned, is that the Antichrist had not yet been revealed. Because you can't have a Great Tribulation without an Antichrist. They kind of go together and Paul reminds them, beginning in verse 4, about the role of the Antichrist and how it'll play out.

Look in verse 4 with me in your Bible. He talks about the Antichrist, “<sup>4</sup> *who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*” And then he asks the question in verse 5, “<sup>5</sup> *Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*”

He starts telling about how the Antichrist is going to exalt himself. Now we know from other passages of scripture, such as the book of Daniel (referring to **Daniel 9:27 ESV**), that the Antichrist is going to come and he's going to make a contract with, the Bible says, many. And I believe that this will be the Jews but it will also be Gentiles as well.

He will make a seven-year contract and he will appear, at the very outset, to be the man with the answers. I believe that the Antichrist is going to look like the solution to all our problems and he is going to bring, what appears to be, great peace into the world. I believe that the Antichrist is actually going to broker a deal between Israel and her enemies so that they can rebuild their temple.

You know, we've seen a lot of presidents come along and try to bring some, some kind of peace to the Middle East, and in some way, shape, or form, they've been able to achieve a sense of it, but it's usually fairly fleeting. But the Antichrist is going to come with some real answers and the people are going to love him.

And I believe that the temple then will be rebuilt. I believe that during that time they will actually reinstitute the animal sacrifices in the temple and everything is going to appear to be going great. Until about halfway through the tribulation period, the Bible tells us that the Antichrist will then renege on that contract.

He will completely reverse himself. He will shut down the sacrificial system and he will walk into the Holy of Holies, in the temple, and he will proclaim himself god and he will make it illegal to worship or pray to any other god. We've seen this before, I mean, in smaller pictures of course. You remember, also in the book of Daniel (referring to **Daniel 3:1-7 ESV**, Nebuchadnezzar did the same stupid thing.

When he was convinced by his advisors to demand that everyone bow down to this golden statue of himself that he created. Whenever the music played, they had to bow down and worship this statue and it was illegal to pray to any other god during that time. Well, the Antichrist is going to do it globally.

And it's going to be, frankly, a very terrible time because, as I said, there's going to be a lot of people who are going to come to Christ during the Tribulation Period, and they will refuse to worship the Antichrist. They will know who he is, they will recognize him for what he is, and they will refuse, and they will pay with their lives.

They will be martyred for their faith. It will be a terrible, terrible time. The natural question that kind of comes into our minds when we think about the revealing of the Antichrist is, what is holding him back? And that, of course, Paul goes on to answer. I think he anticipates the natural question there.

And in verse 6 he says, “*6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.*” There is a time that is coming for the Antichrist to

be revealed but until that which restrains him is moved aside; he continues to be hidden. And then Paul reminds us in verse 7, “<sup>7</sup>(That the) *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work...*” and we didn't need him to tell us that.

All we got to do is watch the news, or sometimes even look out our living room window, to see the lawlessness is already firmly entrenched in our culture in the world in which we live. But as for the actual personification of lawlessness, he says that “*only he...*” I'm looking at verse 7 now, “<sup>7</sup>...*Only he who now restrains it (the Antichrist) will (continue to) do so until (such time as) he is taken out of the way.*” in other words, steps aside, and then the Antichrist will be revealed.

By the way, I...there's a lot of debate among Bible teachers and scholars as to who the restrainer is, that holds back the Antichrist. I believe he's talking about the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit as He functions uniquely through the body of Christ. Again, we are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world. That's our calling and that restraining of sin is something that we do, that is going on from the body of Christ.

You know, all those things I talked about before the battle against, you know, against sexual immorality, rampant sexual immorality, the battle against abortion, the battle against the slave trade, and the calls to prayer. Christians are right here, right now, on the front lines of those things, working day and night, to bring some kind of change into this world. But there is coming a time when the Lord is going to remove all those people and we're going to be taken up to be with the Lord. And I believe that that is largely this restraining force that is removed through the Holy Spirit.

Now, when I talk about the Holy Spirit being removed, in that sense, through the church. I don't want to leave you with the impression that the Holy Spirit is going away during the Great Tribulation. That's not possible. First of all, I already told you that there's going to be a lot of people who are going to come to Christ during the Great Tribulation. Well, they need the Holy Spirit to do that.

So, the Holy Spirit can't go away completely. He is going to be removed from the standpoint of working through the body of Christ to restrain sin and so forth but the Spirit can't go away. People say that, well how are people going to get saved if the Spirit is taken away? Listen, if the Spirit were taken away completely there wouldn't be any life. He is the giver of life in every sense of the word, not just eternal life, but all life.

So, He has to be here in that...at least that capacity. So, I want you to notice that Paul goes on to speak then of the final battle when Jesus comes to earth at the end of the Great Tribulation. In fact, in the context of verse 8, which I'm about to read, we're going to...we're going to go seven years in one verse.

We're going to start off at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. It says, and when the... *“<sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed, (That's the beginning of the Great Tribulation and then he says,) whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth. (That's the end of the Great Tribulation that seven-year span in that one verse.) and bring to nothing by the (appearing of or the ) appearance of his coming.”*

So, we're told how that final battle is going to go. Jesus is going to kill him quickly, quickly. Notice that he says by *“the breath of his mouth.”* That's a reference, by the way, to the Word of God. The Word. He's going to use the Word and that shouldn't surprise us because of who He is.

Do you guys remember how this is actually talked about in the Book of Revelation? Paul, or excuse me, John sees this in a vision. He sees the coming of Jesus to earth, which takes place at the end of the Great Tribulation. Remember? Jesus comes for the church first but he doesn't come to earth to receive the church, Paul says, we meet Him in the air.

Then after the Great Tribulation, Jesus comes to earth and He battles for Israel on her behalf to put down her enemies that have been come together under the control of the Antichrist. Let me show you how John sees this in the Book of Revelation, chapter 19, John writes.

**Revelation 19:11-15 (ESV)**

*Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*

*“<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has*



*a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup> He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> From his mouth (look at this) comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, (He is going to conquer in that battle of Armageddon with His Word. Okay. That's what it says there.) and he will rule them (We just moved on into the Millennial Kingdom. He will rule them...) with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty."*

And that's John seeing in this vision this conquering King, who is Jesus, who comes at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation. Now, as we get into verse 9, we turn back to the Antichrist, for a moment, only so that Paul can explain how he is able to deceive so many people during the Great Tribulation.

Because, you know, have you ever read through Revelation and read about all the junk that's going on? And you're kind of, you're reading through that and you're kind of going...how in the world does anybody harden their heart during the Great Tribulation? When they got hailstones falling from heaven the size of boulders. People are dying off by the thousands and hundreds of thousands and the water is being turned bad and all these other cataclysmic judgments. It's like, how can somebody continue to shake their fist at heaven? How indeed. Verse 9.

*"<sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one (Paul writes) is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, <sup>10</sup> and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, (And here's why they're perishing, end of the verse) because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."*

They refused. They refused. They hardened their heart and they refused to love the truth. What is the truth? You're a sinner. God sent His son to save you from your sin and if you put your faith in Him, you will be saved.

That's the truth. Simple. They refused. No way. Absolutely no way I'm going to believe that. So, Paul says here, that with all the work of Satan, they are deceived and with false signs and wonders. Now, that's an interesting phrase too, isn't it? With false signs and wonders. It reminds us of the fact that there can be false signs and wonders.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have said it. And that reminds us of some important things to remember even today. Can Satan do false signs and wonders today? I mean, we know he's going to do them during the Great Tribulation. Can he do them today? Yeah, of course. Do you guys remember the Book of Exodus (referring to **Exodus 7-11 ESV**)?

Remember when Moses went to Egypt, demanding from Pharaoh that he release the Jews from their slavery, and he began to show forth the power of God that was with him? What did the magicians of Pharaoh do? They replicated some of those same miracles to the point where Pharaoh said, Yeah, pfft, anybody can do that. So can Satan counterfeit the miracles of God? Yeah. Some of them. Not all of them, but there can be counterfeit miracles.

So what's our conclusion from this? Well, don't follow miracles. Do you ever know...the Word never tells you and I to follow miracles. In fact, It says miracles are supposed to follow us. You read the very end of the Book of Mark (referring to **Mark 16:20 ESV**) and it says, and when they went out to share the gospel, signs and wonders followed them.

They didn't follow signs and wonders. That's a danger. We're to follow the Lord with all of our hearts. But then we go on in verse 11 to see how God responds to the stubborn heart that says, I refuse to believe. How's the...how's he going to respond during the Great Tribulation? Verse 11, look with me there.

It says, *“<sup>11</sup> Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, <sup>12</sup> in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* And this is another way of saying that God gave them over to a delusional mind.

Because they determined in their hearts to believe a lie and they determined that ongoingly, I will not believe, I will not believe, I will not believe, and God finally says, fine, and He gives them over to a delusional mind. And this is... it's...I think we're even seeing some of this today, I really do, I think there's already signs of it going on today.

You know it's funny, some people will say, well, you can go ahead and believe in your God, but I believe in science. Okay, great, but do you really? Are you really following science? Because you know what, the more science advances, the more unsustainable is the belief systems that are held by many people who claim to follow science, like evolution.

The more we learn about science, the more we learn about microbiology, how things work, the cells and look into them, and the building blocks of life. The more we learn, the more scientists are realizing that this whole idea that we evolved and that life started from nothing is completely unsustainable. And so now, some of them are beginning to postulate other ideas of how the building blocks of life got here.

I don't know if you've heard about this. Now that science is basically ruling out any possibility of life springing up out of nothing. Now they're beginning to postulate that life was planted here by aliens from outer space. And you think I'm crazy and I'm not. They are. But this is actually...I'm not saying that all scientists believe this, I'm saying that there are thinking rational human beings who are actually postulating these kinds of theories.

Well, obviously they'll say, life got planted here from another planet by aliens and that's how life began on this planet. Why are they saying that? Well, they're saying it because science has ruled out the idea, for all intents and purposes, of it happening through evolutionary processes. And since they've already determined there's no God, they're left with whatever their imaginative minds can come up with.

In other words, they're being given over to a delusional mind. Even though there is not one shred of proof that there's life on any other planets; they continue to hold to it. You see, when a person determines in their mind, and they, you know, they make that decision. There is no God.

Well, you, you, you have to come up with something. You have to come up with some explanation. But just understand here that even though this is going to happen completely during the Great Tribulation, I mean, people are going to be given over to their delusional thinking during the Great Tribulation. This kind of deception can only take root in those who refuse to receive the truth and continue to refuse to receive it.

They're primed for deception because they've consistently chosen falsehood over truth and so in the end, God gives them what they wanted. Do you guys understand that's God's way? Do you get that? We see it elsewhere in the Bible, that's God's way. If you persist in a particular desire in your life, eventually you'll be given over to that desire. If you persist in a particular sin without repentance and just the desire to have nothing to do with God, you'll be given over to that eventually and that's a real serious sort of a thing. Paul actually talks about it...writes about it and this is just a synopsis from Romans chapter 1. Let me put it up on the screen for you. Here's what he says. He says,

**Romans 1:24-25 (ESV)**

*Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

*“<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up (some Bibles say, gave them over.) in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”*

This is God's M.O. If you persist in a particular way and you say to God over and over. I don't believe it. I don't believe it. I don't believe it, and I'm going to do what I want to do, and you can't tell me otherwise. Eventually, you will be handed over. Given over to that lifestyle.

And honestly, it's the same with hell. You know, people ask all the time, well, not all the time, but every so often I get a letter, you know, from somebody saying, you know, how can a loving God send people to hell? And I think to myself, are you kidding me? That you would even ask that question. First of all, the Bible says that (referring to **2 Peter 3:9 ESV**) God is not willing that any should be lost, but that all would come to repentance.

That's His heart. That's the first thing you need to remember. But the second thing is, God bent over backwards to make sure nobody would ever have to go there. He literally moved heaven and earth to become a man himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, to die on a cross and to bear our sin so that all we would have to do is look to Him, put our hope in Him, and we'll be saved.

It doesn't even cost you anything. It's free of charge. It'd be one thing if He created this means of salvation and then we had to attain to it somehow, but he didn't. He just said, believe, and you will be saved. Call upon the name of the Lord, and you will be saved. So you're asking me how God can send people to hell? Are you joking?

The Bible tells us hell wasn't even created for man. It speaks of hell created for the devil and his angels (referring to **Matthew 25:41 ESV**). So why do people end up going there? Because it's what they want. They have persisted in a lifestyle and an attitude all their lives where they're saying to God, I don't want you. Do you hear me? And God finally says, fine, you will get what you want.

You can only reject God for so long before you're finally given over, in that rejection, to the lifestyle that you choose. Yeah, it's something pretty incredible about God. He honors our choices. Sometimes I wish He didn't, but He does.

So, Paul ends the chapter in verse 13 saying, “<sup>13</sup> but...” Can I stop there for just a moment? Do you guys all know what but means? It means everything I've said to you before doesn't apply to you or if you're talking to somebody where

they're telling you something, and they go, but what that means is forget whatever I've said, now I'm going to tell you what I really think. You're really a great person, but (right?) throw that part out, now they're going to tell you the truth.

It's not that Paul hasn't said the truth up to this point, but what he's been talking about, as it relates to the Great Tribulation, doesn't apply to the believers. It doesn't apply to them and that's why he says, beginning here, verse 13, when he starts talking to the church *“<sup>13</sup> but (repeats) we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because (God didn't choose you for all those things.) God chose you as the firstfruits (your Bible may say, chose you from the beginning.) to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”*

And he says in verse 14, *“<sup>14</sup> To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* I could preach for the next month on that verse right there. I won't. Ryan told me before I started first service my battery had 18 hours on it, so I thought I could tell you guys just to get comfortable. If we had just even a little sense of what Paul means there when he says that you've been called through the gospel so that you might obtain glory, we'd freak out. I mean in a good way.

You've been called through the gospel so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He's going to share His glory with us. I know, I know, you're thinking to yourself, we don't deserve it. Yeah, of course we don't, we never did. Verse 15, *“<sup>15</sup> So then, brothers, stand firm (don't believe this nonsense about the fact that you're in the Great Tribulation. You're not. And he says,) and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us,...”* I actually don't like the word traditions there. I think it conjures up for you and I things that Paul didn't really mean. This is one of those times when the NIV actually got it better. They say, I'm trying to remember in my mind, but it's something like hold to the teachings because that's what he's talking about. Hold to the things that we taught you. In fact, he goes on to say at the end of the verse *“<sup>15</sup>...either by our spoken word or by our letter.”* So, in other words, hold on to the things that we taught you.

Verse 16 *“<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts (because they needed to be comforted) and establish them in every good work and word.”*