

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

There is no ground for justification in anything man is or does, has done or will do. Even after his being born again, called, converted, sanctified, the ground of God's verdict whereby he is justified is never in the sinner. It is not because of his faith, or because of the good works he performs by faith, that God declares him to be righteous. Nor can these add anything at all to his righteousness before God. The ground of his righteousness is never in man. It is outside of man, outside of the sinner himself. The ground of the verdict of God justifying the ungodly is Christ alone. [Herman Hoeksema, The Triple Knowledge, Vol 2]

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

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Don't be Deceived – The Spirit of Antichrist

(Part 6 – Taking His Seat in the Sanctuary)

November 9, 2025

Sermon Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Scripture Reading: Revelation 2:18-29

We continue this morning with part 6 in our series on the Antichrist – the presently operative *spirit* of antichrist, and as in this morning's text, the specific Antichrist, the man of sin Paul warned us will be revealed in the last of the last days before Christ comes again.

We have seen that this *great apostasy* will take place before the Antichrist is revealed.

2Th 2:3-4 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and

the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

We are living in a day of widespread apostasy. Professing Christians, leaders in the visible church, are increasingly “deconstructing” the temple of God – His church, and replacing it with bricks made of Satan’s lies. In these times, we must imitate the Psalmist’s faith:

Psa 26:1-12 A Psalm of David. Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. (2) Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. (3) For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, **And I have walked in Your truth. (4) I do not sit with deceitful men, Nor will I go with pretenders. (5) I hate the assembly of evildoers, And I will not sit with the wicked. (6) I shall**

wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Your altar, O LORD, (7) That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. (8) O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house And the place where Your glory dwells. (9) Do not take my soul away along with sinners, Nor my life with men of bloodshed, (10) In whose hands is a wicked scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes. (11) But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; Redeem me, and be gracious to me. (12) My foot stands on a level place; In the congregations I shall bless the LORD.

Notice the emphasis of the Psalmist here. Not a joining of hands with everyone, but a *separation* from “deceitful men,” “pretenders,” “evildoers,” and “the wicked.” Notice especially that word “pretenders.” It means to conceal, to keep secret. In other words, people who conceal and disguise who they really are. And this is, of course, exactly what Satan and his servants do. They come *as angels*

of light, as sons of righteousness, but they are not.

Is the visible church today, and so many of these so-called “para-church organizations” and individuals “Christian” leaders such as Turning Point USA, the Billy Graham Association, many if not most “Christian” musicians – are they *separating* from these “pretenders” or joining hands with them? The answer is – *they are becoming pretenders themselves. Servants of darkness.*

We cannot and must not remain ignorant of Satan’s devices in all of this. The Antichrist will, as we are about to see, establish his own one-world “church” and demand that everyone bow down to his image. That is without question where the spirit of antichrist is leading now. Evangelicals are joining with Rome, with Mormons, with prosperity gospel preachers, the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR).

And yet:

2Co 6:14-18 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? (16) Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. (17) "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. (18) "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

We cannot and we must not be ignorant of these things. Most typically, the professing Christian today is compromised. They have bought into the lies of the enemy and naively and willfully ignore the clear teaching and commands of

God's Word to constantly be on guard for Satan's lies. Listen:

If you are associated with people who claim to be Christians, with an organization that claims to be serving Christ, you cannot and must not naively and blindly assume that they are genuine. So many of these kind of people believe that the pope is a Christian, that Mormons are Christians, that 7th Day Adventism is Christian, and on and on the list goes.

Let me ask this: When you hear challenges like this, what is your reaction? Is it "*how dare you judge these people. How dare you question the preaching of Billy Graham. How dare you criticize Turning Point USA? No wonder your church is so small. You are so judgmental.*" Or do you sit up and listen and resolve to be doubly on guard against deception, being even more diligent to test the spirits as God command us to do:

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to

see whether they are from God, because **many** false prophets have gone out into the world.

When you meet or hear someone who claims to be a Christian, especially if they are *teaching or preaching what they claim to be God's Word*, what is your response? **Do you believe every spirit?** That is, do you believe everyone who says they are a Christian or who says they are teaching the Bible, really is? **If you do, you are being disobedient to God's command.**

How many false preachers and people who claim to be Christian leaders or organizations are "out there" speaking for the antichrist in disguise? How many? A few? MANY false prophets have gone out into the world.

Mat 24:23-25 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. (24) "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. (25)

"Behold, I have told you in advance.

Test, examine. How? With truth. What truth? God's Word. *But this requires that you know God's Word!* That we all apply ourselves diligently as those Berean Christians did so long ago – *even though an apostle was preaching to them!*

Here is another advantage of knowing God's Word thoroughly – *you will be able to say, after you test and examine a sermon or teaching, that "this is not just the preacher's opinion, it is the Word of God."* You won't be following a man, you will be following Christ, and you will know it.

When I, for example, warn you that Turning Point USA is disobeying God's Word to separate from unbelievers and false teachers, it is your responsibility to test and examine this claim. Is TP USA joining hands with Mormons, with heretical people who claim to be apostles, or with Rome itself? If so, and I am telling you that it is, then

it is being energized by the spirit of antichrist, not by the Spirit of God. And it is the duty of every single one of us, to test the spirit of TP USA to see if it is of Christ or not.

These are not suggestions, they are commands:

Eph 6:11-14 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. (12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (13) Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (14) Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,**

Truth. The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Put it

on! Pick it up! If you don't, you are going down. You will be swept away by antichrist and join his ranks.

Apostasy and Ecumenism are the Tools of Antichrist

All that by way of introduction!
Let's turn now to our text:

2Th 2:1-12 Now we ask you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, (2) that you not be quickly shaken in your mind or be alarmed whether by a spirit or a word or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

(3) Let no one in any way **deceive you**, for it has not come unless **the apostasy** comes first, and **the man of lawlessness** is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) **who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the sanctuary of God, exhibiting himself as being God.**

(5) Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? (6) And you know what restrains him now, so that **in his time he will be revealed.**

(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.

(8) And then that lawless one will be revealed—whom the Lord Jesus **WILL SLAY WITH THE BREATH OF HIS MOUTH** and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming— (9) whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (10) and **with all the deception** of unrighteousness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (11) And for this reason God sends upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, (12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

The mystery of lawlessness is already at work!

Now, when the Antichrist, this man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, is revealed – and the day is coming when he will be revealed to the whole world – what is he going to do? What is he preparing to do right now by working toward the great apostasy?

He is going to claim that he is God and he will seat himself in God's sanctuary and exhibit himself as being God. He will have an image of himself made and order everyone to worship it.

Rev 13:1-9 And the dragon [Satan] stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast [The Antichrist] coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. (2) And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and

his throne and great authority. (3) And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain fatally, and his fatal wound was healed. **And the whole earth marveled and followed after the beast. (4) And they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"**

(5) And there was given to him a mouth speaking great boasts and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. (6) And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

(7) And it was also given to him **to make war with the saints and to overcome them**, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

[NOTE: This disproves pre-millennial theology which claims that the church will be raptured out

of the world before the great tribulation reign of Antichrist]

(8) And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. (9) If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

Question: Do YOU have an ear to hear this? Do you believe God's Word? Do you acknowledge that if you allow yourself to be swept up by the ecumenical, Christ-denying movement of today, you are already joining ranks with Antichrist? *Test the spirits to see if they be of God.*

Let's look at these verses again:

(3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it has not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat

in the sanctuary of God, exhibiting himself as being God.

Satan has always lusted to be God.

Isa 14:12-14 "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! (13) "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. (14) 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

So it is no surprise that his "man" the Antichrist will appear, announcing that he is God.

What is the sanctuary in which the Antichrist seats himself?

I watched a video recently on Justin Peters' channel (you should subscribe) in which he interviewed two Greek and Hebrew language scholars who worked on the new Legacy Standard Bible translation.

In it they explained why they translated the Greek word “naos” (which is here in our text, 2 Thes 2:4) instead of “temple.” They noted that there is a specific Greek word for temple (heiron) but here it is naos. Temple is a broader term but naos refers to the *sanctuary*, that is, the inner holy places of the Old Testament temple. Even the holy of holies.

So the Antichrist, in deeming himself to be God, will enter even into the sanctuary, the holy of holies, and declare himself to be God.

But the question remains, what then is this sanctuary? Some Christians, premillennialists for instance, would say that this is the literal Jerusalem temple which will be rebuilt one day. But we disagree, being amillennialist. Listen to William Hendriksen explain:

“The man of sin is the adversary of God, of God’s law, of God’s people. As such he immediately

reminds one of his master, Satan, who is the great adversary.

In very close connection with this opposing activity stands the fact that this adversary who will appear in the end-time ‘exalts himself against everything (that is) called God or worshiped. In his reckless audacity and ferocious insolence he uplifts himself not only against the only true God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and against all so-called gods, but also against all sacred objects, against whatever stands in connection with religion. The reference is probably to such objects as temples, places set aside for divine worship, altars, religious statues. He rages against them all. He recognizes only one god (HE would spell it with a capital: God), namely, himself!

Hence he seats himself in *the sanctuary* (the term naos in its primary sense, in distinction from heron, generally refers to the shrine itself rather than to the entire building complex) of God, that is *in the church*...for the term naos is clearly used here metaphorically.”

1Co 3:16 Do you not know that you are a sanctuary of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1Co 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

2Co 6:16 Or what agreement has a sanctuary of God with idols? For we are a sanctuary of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

Eph 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, (21) in whom the whole building, being joined together, is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, (22) in whom you also are being built

together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Now, listen very carefully:

This means that the spirit of antichrist right now is operating through these truth-denying lies of ecumenism, to prepare the way for THE Antichrist establish himself as a self-proclaimed god, the false head and leader of the visible church.

"The man of lawlessness will recognize only one deity, namely, himself, and will seat himself in God's sanctuary, and will demand divine adoration for himself alone." [Ibid]

His primary activity now is *within the visible church*, not so much as within the world.

Listen again to William Hendriksen:

"Satan, while perfectly aware of the fact that he cannot himself become incarnate, nevertheless would like to imitate the second

person of the Trinity also in this respect as far as possible. He yearns for a man over whom he will have complete control, and who will perform his will as thoroughly as Jesus performed the will of the Father. It will have to be a man of outstanding talents.

But as yet the devil is being frustrated in his attempt to put this plan into operation. Someone and something is always holding back the deceiver's man of lawlessness. But this does not satisfy him. It is as if he and his man of sin bide their time. At the divinely decreed moment when, as punishment for man's willingness to cooperate with this spirit, the 'someone' and 'something' that now holds back is removed, Satan will begin to carry out his plans: *And then shall the lawless one be revealed.* [Ibid]

This will initiate also the great time of trouble and persecution for Christ's true people who will refuse to bow down.

We are encouraged to persevere however because this one-world

Satanic empire will last only a short time, then the Lord will return and "slay him with the breath of His mouth....There will not be a long drawn-out conflict...The issue will be settled in a moment." [Ibid]

This also means that EVERY remnant of his kingdom – his followers, his institutions, his kingdom, will be swept away forever.

The Great Delusion

We are being tested in these things right now. Do we love Christ's truth, or are we responding with cowardice and caving into Satan's ecumenical lies? Listen to Paul challenge us here:

2Th 2:9-12 whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (10) and with all the deception of unrighteousness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (11) And for this reason God sends upon them a

deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, (12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

Buddhism, Hinduism, New Age, Mormonism, resurrection-denying “Christianity,” Roman Catholicism, hey, it’s all good. Anyone who joins in with these lies, who claims to be a Christian but says that Jesus is not the only way, is loving the lie of Satan. They are not loving the truth. And therefore, as God always does in His judgments, He gives such people what they want – *a lie*. He sends a deluding spirit upon them so that they can only believe what is false *in order that* they receive the same judgment on that Day as Satan and his minions.

The Danger of Love for this World-

Do you believe these things? Are you immersing yourself in truth? Putting on the armor? Do you know what the armor is? Because this is the **ONLY** way to stand

against the devil. He is crafty. He is deceiving. He is a liar. And so are his servants.

The chief mistake I made when I came to this church 32 years ago was assuming that the majority of the members were truly born again. Just difficult people in many cases, but born again. People who would respond to the truth of God’s Word preached. *I was absolutely wrong*. They were counterfeits who did not love God’s Word because they loved the enemy’s lies. And so God handed them over. They are bound in delusion and most if not all of them are headed for the same end as Satan. Some have already perished.

Like the Thessalonians, *we have no excuse for ignorance. 2Th 2:5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?* We have been told. We have God’s Word. It has been preached and preached and taught to us. Stop being careless and undiscerning if you have been.

