

Thompson Road Baptist Church

November 6, 2016

The Worthy Perspective: 2 Thessalonians 2

1. The immediate perspective of the text (2.1-12)
 - a. Paul calls on the people to not be shaken by false reports they've received about the end times, and then works to set them straight (vv.1-3a)
 - i. The Thessalonian church feared that the Day of the Lord had come and that they had missed it
 - b. The order of events (vv.3b-12)
 - i. A man will arise who opposes the law and God (vv.3b-5)
 1. His opposition is to all law, both moral and civil, leading to the destruction of many; cf. Matthew 24.11-12, "And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold."
 2. His undermining of the law and God is an open affront to all that holds society together. He will institute both anarchy and totalitarian reign over people, demanding their worship
 - a. Note: We are best to understand this as a real person/event, but should exercise caution in naming it. Many have stood as forerunners to this role throughout history, but none have yet to be the final fulfillment of it
 - b. To borrow from John, the spirit of the antichrist is that which denies Jesus and has been present in the world since biblical times; cf. 1 John 4.1-3, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already."
 - ii. A full rebellion will break out, only to be put down by the coming of Christ (vv.6-8)
 1. The spirit of the antichrist is currently at work, but is being restrained from having its full effect
 - a. What is restraining it?
 - i. The Holy Spirit and the Church? This seems to make sense, but brings into question why Paul is not more explicit and why Paul states that the church will be present in the world when Christ returns (recall 1 Thessalonians 4)
 - ii. Rome and the power of the State? This accords with what Paul previously taught on the state's power to

uphold the law, agrees with the gendering of the passage, and makes sense of why things are spoken of so secretly

2. Once this restraint is removed, the lawless one comes to full power, and yet is easily (and, perhaps, quickly) put down
- iii. Satan's attempt to parody the incarnation will be condemned by God (vv.9-12)
 1. The Antichrist is a satanic attempt to imitate Christ, coming in signs and wonders, positioning himself in the place of God. Many will be deceived by this
 2. That they delight in wickedness while failing to believe the truth only makes the justice of God's judgment all the more appropriate; cf. Romans 1.28-32, "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."
2. The larger perspective of the text (2.13-17)
 - a. Having received Paul's specific instruction about the order of end time affairs, he now moves to a general encouragement about God's sovereignty
 - b. The circumstances of our salvation
 - i. Paul gives two strong, parallel statements in regards to our salvation which indicate the initiator, means and ends
 1. Chosen by God to be saved through faith and sanctification (v.13)
 2. Called by God to share in Christ's glory through the Gospel (v.14)
 - a. See also Ephesians 1 and 2, Romans 8
 - ii. Moreover, by these words Paul demonstrates that our salvation is an event planned and enacted from the beginning to the end of time
 1. Note, "from the beginning" in v.13 to the "obtain[ing] of glory" in v.14
 - iii. There is no need to be shaken by anything in this world (see v.2) because God has sovereignly stood in control of every jot and tittle of our lives, and he always will
 1. Note: People's fears about the election, fears about revitalization
 - c. Our response to this
 - i. Standing firm and holding onto the teachings of Scripture (v.15)
 1. There is no need to be anxious, no need to craft new doctrine to steady our feet. The faith once for all delivered to the saints is our firm foundation for living; cf. Ephesians 2.19-21, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the

whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”

- d. Paul’s final prayer
 - i. Knowing this truth, Paul still prays that God will make it manifest in their hearts
 - 1. Just because we know the truth doesn’t mean we always apply it faithfully, but through the brotherhood of faith we can encourage and build one another up; cf. Hebrews 10.24-25, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
3. Conclusion
- a. n/a