Women’s Bible Study

I & II Thessalonians

**Twelfth Study** - II Thessalonians 2:6-12

**“Antichrist’s Restraint and Deception”**

Studies in I&II Thessalonians Pages 59-62 (using Lesson 13)

Once again, the questions from Rev. Hanko’s Study Guides are in parenthesis after the questions.

All quotes by Wm. Hendrikson are from his New Testament Commentary on I & II Thessalonians

Rev. Hanko does not follow this part of the chapter verse by verse, but takes sections at a time,

 describing the antichrist, his restraint, how he deceives, his destruction, etc.

For many of the days in this lesson we will have two quotes in the ‘Food for thought’.

There are excellent Reformed Witness Hour sermons, which explain these verses so well

that it will benefit us to read quotes from many of them.

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**\_Day One**

Ye Know What Withholdeth

Today we will look at verse 6 and the withholding of ‘that man of sin’

II Thessalonians 2:6 - Study Guide page 60

Read: II Thessalonians 2:1-6

Do: 1. Read the introduction to Lesson 13 on page 59 in the study guide.

2. Read over verses 3-6 to remember what we learned in our last lesson about the man of sin.

3. In verse 6, Paul tells the Thessalonians that they know ‘what withholdeth…’ How would they

 know that?

4. In verse 6b, Paul continues, ‘that he might be revealed in his time.’ Who only is it that could hold the antichrist back so that he could be revealed at the proper time?

5. What is one definite reason why antichrist has been prevented from appearing? (Q.2.d.pg. 60)

 See Matthew 24:14

**Food for thought:** “Even as Satan entered into Judas at the appropriate time, so also Satan shall enter in the heart of the Antichrist at the appropriate time to carry out his dastardly work. And this antichrist will be the highest manifestation of the Son of perdition, yea, will be the son of perdition par excellence. He shall be devoted to the cause of hell and perdition as no one before him, though possessing at the same time all the elements of those who had gone before him. He is the fully developed ‘man of sin’. All of sin finds its end in him. He is the incarnate sinner… There is however comfort in this that he is called the son of perdition… For he is the Son of Perdition because he has been ordained to be this. He cannot go further than is written of him. He cannot destroy any that are given into the hands of the Savior by our Father. For also in the last day it will be said by our Lord: ‘Those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.’ The son of perdition MUST be revealed for a short time. He MUST serve he purpose of the Most High for a time. After that he will be abased, and the humble and faithful shall be exalted. The son of perdition is born for perdition and serves the purpose of perdition and finally ends in perdition, according to the immutable decree of our God and Savior.”

 L.V. in the Standard Bearer article: The Son of Perdition

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\_Day 1 cont\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Second Food for thought: “Before the rise of Antichrist and great persecution take place, the church is to be busy. Instead of simply watching these developments and wringing our hands in despair, or only assuming a *defensive* posture, the church is to be busy with the positive and offensive work of the preaching of the gospel to all nations, as the Lord commanded in Matthew 28:18-20. And this work of the gospel preaching to all nations is *connected* by the Lord to the end times in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come."
 This shows how important the preaching of the gospel is! The end of the world and the coming of Jesus Christ wait on the preaching! The end cannot come until the gospel is preached; and when it is preached, it will *come*!”

 Rev. Barry Gritters in the S.B. article: The End Times (5): Preaching To All Nations, Then the End

To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:6

“Any premature manifestation of Antichrist

 would have made the gathering of the Church impossible.

Only when the Church is gathered,

will Antichrist be permitted to come.”

 Prof. H. Hanko in the RWH sermon The Mystery of Iniquity

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**\_Day Two\_**

Mystery of Iniquity

Today we will take a look at how the ‘mystery of iniquity’ does already work.

II Thessalonians 2:7a - No study guide

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Acts 20:28-32 I John 4:3 Jude 1-16

Do: 1. What is ‘the mystery of iniquity’? (How is ‘mystery’ used in scripture?)

1. What does ‘iniquity’ mean?
2. How does this iniquity already ‘work’?
3. What signs of this iniquity already working do you see in the world around you?
4. What signs of this iniquity already working do you see in the nominal church world at this time?

Food for thought: “The mystery of iniquity did already work, says our text. In other words, the beginning of, the principle whereby the working of the man of sin is characterized was already a reality, it worked, the process was on already. But that working (actually energy, that is working toward a result) was still a mystery, it was hidden, not apparent to all, one needed spiritual eyes of understanding to see it, realize it. He needed the revelation and Spirit of God to be aware of it. Paul knew it, he saw it and told God’s people about it. And in the very working, energy, of the principle of iniquity, which was still then a mystery, Paul saw the evidence that the man of sin would surely come… At times it looked as though the parousia of the man of sin was imminent. That’s the reason too why we have a great many types and forerunners of the Antichrist in the New Testament Dispensation. That’s why there is also historic, progressive, typical fulfillment of this coming of the man of sin. Our fathers pointed out definite individuals as being the Antichrist. And they were right in as far as these individuals were types. Types of the man of sin are e.g. men like Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, and many others… And then shall that Wicked be revealed. When? When all things are ripe for it.” J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Parousia of the Man of Sin

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\_\_Day 2 cont\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Second Food for thought: “Although the text speaks of ‘the mystery of iniquity’, or, better, ‘the mystery of lawlessness; the reference is to the one who is called in other places in Scripture, ‘the Antichrist.’…It is evident that he opposes God because he is a lawless one. God created the whole world under the rule of law. This law expresses man’s place in the creation and God’s will for every creature which God formed. Because this law expresses God’s purpose and will for every creature, obedience to God is obedience to His law. Opposition to that law is opposition to God Himself… Paul speaks of this lawlessness as a mystery. The word ‘mystery’ in Scripture always refers to something which is hidden until such a time that God is pleased to reveal it…In speaking here of the mystery of lawlessness, Paul refers to the fact that this is hidden in a certain sense. It is hidden because the full manifestation of it has not yet come but awaits some future day for its full manifestation. Antichrist is really always present in the world… But the fact is that we cannot see him as yet and will not be able to see him until the time when he is revealed… Although the full manifestation of it will only come with the Antichrist himself, it is presently operative in the world. ‘It doth already work,’ the apostle says. We must be sure that we understand this. This mystery of lawlessness is so present in the world that it gives impulse and energy to all that happens. It lies, so to speak, behind the scenes, and is the driving power of all that takes place…While the full manifestation of Antichrist is still hidden, therefore, the principle on which he operates already works.”

 Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Mystery of Iniquity

To take with you today: I John 2:18

“The text says that Antichrist is restrained for the purpose of being revealed.

This is God’s work, therefore.

God reveals him. He is in the hands of God.

God moves him to his throne at God’s time.

He comes at such a time as God has appointed in His eternal counsel.

He cannot come before that.

 He has his hour, given him of God.” Prof. Hanko

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**\_Day Three**

**Antichrist Prevented From Coming**

Today we begin to look at possible reasons the antichrist has not yet come.

**II Thessalonians 2:7b - Study Guide page 59-60**

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-12 Genesis 11:1-10 Job 1:12 Matthew 8:31

**Do:** 1. The restraint of antichrist (#2.pg. 59)

What outward restraint did God send at the time of the tower of Babel? (Q.2.a.pg. 59)

 See Genesis 11:1-10

1. What has prevented the appearance of the antichrist?

 See Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 10 Q&A 27-28. (Q.2.b.pg. 59)

1. Verse 7 is a difficult verse! First of all, what is the meaning of ‘letteth’ and ‘let’ in this verse?

 See Exodus 5:1-4 as an example of how this word is used in King James language.

 Do we know who the first ‘he’ referring to?

 Do we know who the second ‘he’ referring to?

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\_\_Day 3 cont\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the meaning of “he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” (2:7)?

 (Q. 2.c.pg. 60)

Food for thought: There is a great variety of opinions on the meaning of this verse. We list three of them here:

 “The sense of the entire passage (verses 6&7) seems to be this: 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. This, of course, happens under God’s direction. Hence, for the time being, the worst Satan can do is to promote the spirit 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 (‘the appropriate season’) when, as a 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.” Wm. Hendrikson

Second Food for thought: “Nevertheless, there is that which restrains all this. This is emphasized very strongly in the text. This is not entirely clear from our King James translation. The Revised Version reads: ‘And now ye know that which restraineth to the end that he might be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way.’ This translation catches the idea of the text. In other words, this principle of lawlessness is, in a certain sense, restrained until such a time as Antichrist himself is ready to be revealed. The man of sin cannot come until his appointed time. Even though the principle of antichrist is always present, his hands are tied until the time appointed by God… We must be clear on this point, however. There is not a restraint of this principle of lawlessness which operates in the hearts of sinful men so that they are, from within, made less than totally depraved and so that they are capable of doing good. This is a denial of total depravity. Rather, God restrains the full manifestation of the mystery of lawlessness by His providence. Through Jesus Christ Who is Lord of all, God governs sovereignly in all the affairs of this world. Nothing takes place without His will and decree. The king’s heart, even, is in the hand of the Lord as rivers of water: He turneth it withersoever He will.”

 Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Mystery of Iniquity

**Third Food for thought:**  The "he" in verse 7 is someone who restrains Antichrist from appearing too early, before the time that God has appointed for him.  The King James "letteth" in verse 7 is 'restrains' or 'holds back.' The one who does this is a person, a person referred to with the masculine pronoun.  It is the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity.  He is at work in history and among the nations governing all things in such a way that He restrains Antichrist from appearing too soon.  The first part of verse 7 teaches that the spirit of Antichrist was at work already in the apostle's day, trying to bring about the Antichrist and the antichristian world-power.  But God must gather His church, which is impossible under Antichrist. Therefore, the Holy Ghost restrains him from appearing.

    My reasons for this answer are the following.  The one who restrains must be God, for only God has the power to determine when Antichrist will appear and only God governs history.  It is the Holy Ghost who by His power is present in the world governing all events.  Further, as the Spirit of Jesus Christ, He operates in the world on behalf of Jesus and His church.  Also, regarding a similar time and event, it was the Spirit of God that was striving with the wicked world before the flood governing all things so that the destruction of the flood would happen only when Noah had built the ark.  Today, God's Spirit is striving with the wicked world so that Antichrist will come only when God has determined. Prof. David Engelsma

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# To take with you today: Romans 8:38&39

“All creaturely activity is God’s work.

 When God works the creature acts;

not after God works, certainly not before God works, but when God works.

You never separate the activity of the creature from the work of Almighty God.”

 Rev. R. Veldman in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: Divine Providence

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\_Day Four\_

Antichrist’s Authority and Deception

Today we will look closer at the Antichrist, to see who gives him power and authority and how he deceives.

II Thessalonians 2:9 - Study Guide page 60

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 John 8:42-44 Revelation 13:1-4 and 12-15

Do: 1. The deception of antichrist (#3 pg. 60)

 Who gives antichrist his authority and power to deceive? (Q. 3.a.pg.60)

 Verse 9

 John 8:44

 Revelation 13:4

2. How does antichrist deceive the people? (Q. 3.b.pg.60)

 See Exodus 7:22

 Exodus 8:7 & 18

 See Matthew 24:24

 Rev. 13: 12-15

Food for thought: “The name, ‘Satan’ means, ‘adversary.’ Satan is a fallen angel, perhaps the highest of all the angels when he was created. He was set in the heavens as the ruler, under God, of the angelic hosts. But he chose, shortly after this creation, to rebel against God, evidently with the purpose of taking God’s throne away from him and ruling in God’s place. He persuaded a large part of the angelic host to join in this rebellion to tear God’s power from Him. Although he was unsuccessful, his purpose has not changed…But though he is defeated, nevertheless, he continues for a little while. And he is the one, the culprit, who lies behind all the spirit of lawlessness, which operates in this present world… Men are Satan’s allies who do his bidding and perform his will. Satan accomplishes his purpose by ruling in the affairs of men and devils so that he is, so to speak, the power behind all that takes place. And when all the lawlessness of our present time comes to culmination in the one man of sin, the antichrist, Satan will be the moving force behind all that he does. So completely will antichrist be the servant of Satan, and so completely will Satan dominate in all Antichrist’s activities that it will be as if Satan himself were the ruler of all.”

 Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Power of the Lawless One

Second food for thought: “As to the manner of his parousia we read first of all that it is ‘After the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders.’ This tells us in the first place that the man of sin is the product and representative of Satan. Not Satan himself, but Satan directed, guided, controlled. He receives his power from the dragon. (Rev. 13.) He is devil inspired and filled with satanic ambition.

 Food for thought continued

\_\_Day 4 cont\_ “Says Paul: “His coming is after the working of Satan.” The original has for ‘the working’, ‘the energy’: Satanic energy fills him. His coming is in accord with, in harmony with and conformity with Satan. Also, in this respect he is the very counterpart of Christ. Christ is filled with the Spirit of God. His parousia is after the energy of the Spirit. The man of sin is filled with the satanic spirit, the very headquarters and dwelling place of Beelzebub… The word power here implies dynamic power, ability. He will manifest dynamic power and ability in every sphere and department of life. Absolute dictator is he, and he will show it, manifest it, prove it, back it up. None shall be able to withstand him or dare to contradict him, - except the saints. He is the power of the State; the power of the Church; the power of life and death. Who can make war against the beast? And wielding all dynamic power, his coming is at the same time with signs and lying wonder. With signs, to show, signify, manifest, prove that he is god and that he should be worshipped. And with wonders. Wonders here is that which astonishes, that which forces people to stand in awe and make them exclaim: “We never saw the like.”

 J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Parousia of the Man of Sin

To take with you today: Revelation 13:12&13

“Be of good cheer, people of God.

Christ, our Christ, who bought us with His precious blood,

Rules over all, as Lord of lords and King of kings.

Therefore when ye see all these things, know that your deliverance is near,

 Even at the doors.” (J.D.)

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\_Day Five

Lying Wonders

Today we will take a closer look at the lying wonders the Antichrist will perform.

II Thessalonians 2:9 - Study Guide page 60

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Deut. 13:1-3 Acts 8:9&11 Rev. 16:13&14

Do: 1. Are his wonders real or only cunning tricks? (Q. 3.c.pg.60)

2. What is the purpose of antichrist’s deception? (Q. 3.d.pg.60)

3. What other scriptural examples are there of magicians’ performing wonders? (Q. 3.e.pg.60)

 Food for thought: “The text speaks of the fact that Antichrist’s coming will be after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. All these words refer to miracles. Powers are miracles, which are so powerful that they do not have any natural explanation. Signs refer to miracles from the viewpoint of their purpose to illustrate spiritual and heavenly truths. And miracles are called wonders because they fill one with awe and astonishment because they exalt the power and glory of God. Christ and His servants performed miracles. They did this to point to the truths of the gospel of salvation in Christ…All these miracles pointed to the salvation, which God gives His people through Christ. They were, so to speak, the proof of the truth of the gospel and of the wonder of grace. But just because they were proofs of Christ’s work of salvation, antichrist also performs miracles to substantiate and prove his claim that he is Christ. Satan gives him these powers for a while and by means of them he bolsters and supports his claim that men must look to him for salvation and redemption from the ills of society. Their extraordinary character fills men with awe and all rush to serve the beast. It must be remembered however, in the first place, that they are always imitations of the miracles, which Christ performed. They are never the genuine things. They are fake and counterfeit, intended to deceive. Food for thought continued

\_Day 5 cont\_\_ “They are empty and hollow because they are intended to support a lying beast. But they are such successful imitations that they succeed in their purpose of deceiving the people of the earth. In the second place, it must also be remembered that they are performed by Antichrist through a power, which Satan gives him – but strictly under the control of God. Just as God gave Satan power to take away all Job’s possessions through fire from heaven and raids by Chaldeans and Sabaens, so does God give Satan power to enable Antichrist to perform these lying wonders. The purpose is deception. The kingdom of Christ must be imitated if Satan is, through Antichrist, going to persuade men to worship him. And because the kingdom of Christ is established through the mighty power of Christ’s cross and through the wonder of grace – and because all this was so astonishingly demonstrated through the miracles which Christ and His apostles performed, so does Antichrist deceive man into thinking that his kingdom is the true kingdom of Christ by use of miracles. He claims to do everything which Christ did. He assures men that they need not and must not look anywhere else for that kingdom promised in scripture than to the kingdom, which he has established. And so that kingdom of Antichrist is made to look as nearly like the kingdom of Christ as is possible. In that kingdom is peace and prosperity, outward happiness and joy, healing of disease and long life. The whole creation has been mace subject to man and is used to serve man’s purpose. It will be a marvelous time of man and it will indeed appear as if Christ has come.”

Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Power of the Lawless One

To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:9

“Thy God shall reign for evermore, praise Him, O Zion and adore;

The Lord is heaven’s eternal King, to Him all praise and honor bring.” Psalter #401 st. 4

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\_Day Six\_

God’s Sovereignty Over Deception

Today we will see how God is Sovereign over even the deceptions of the Antichrist.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12 - Study Guide page 60

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Job 1:1-12 I Kings 27:19-23

Do: 1. Show how God is sovereign over deception. (Q. 3.f.pg.60)

 Verses 10-12

 I Kings 27:19-23

 Job 1:6-12

 Job 2:1-6

Food for thought: “All shall be deceived – except the Church. The deception shall be terrible. Only the elect will be able to withstand. There is even a note of deepest urgency here. Christ, when speaking of the same thing in Matthew 24, tells us that if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. This is impossible, not because the elect, even, are able to stand by their own power but because grace upholds and supports them every moment. But even the elect, because they are weak in themselves, will begin to wonder, to ask, whether it is not all true what Antichrist says. They will, as it were, be in mortal danger of being persuaded. They will stand only by grace. They will be kept only by the skin on their teeth. Or, as Peter expresses it, they will be scarcely saved. The only, the only reason, bar none, is grace – sovereign, irresistible mighty grace, God shall keep them – even in spite of themselves. God shall show them this great deception and give them grace to understand and to discern, to resist the blandishments of antichrist and to be faithful in the face of fiery persecution. Food for thought continued

\_\_Day 6 cont\_ “But we must not be alarmed for all this too is under God’s sovereign control. Nothing is emphasized so strongly in the text. Antichrist rules by Satan’s power and all men rush after the beast. But Antichrist cannot come to power without God’s will and his rule is limited and circumscribed by God’s command. He may rage and rant, but God is on His throne.”

Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Power of the Lawless One

To take with you today: Job 1:12

“Nothing shall prevent the coming of the kingdom of Christ.

Then those who are faithful will be saved

and brought into the everlasting kingdom of heaven

to serve Christ in perfection,

 forever and ever, world without end.” Prof. Hanko

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 Day Seven\_

Consumed with the Spirit of His Mouth

Today we look at what will happen to ‘that Wicked’ when he shall be revealed.

II Thessalonians 2:8 - Study Guide Page 61

Read: II Thessalonians 2: 6-12 Rev. 19:11-21

Do: 1. Destruction of “that Wicked” (#4 pg. 61)

 Who is meant by ‘that Wicked’ (vs. 8)? (Q.4.a.pg.61)

1. How will “that Wicked” be consumed and destroyed? (Q.4.b.pg.61)

1. What does this mean? (Q.4.c.pg.61)
2. What other scriptural passages speak about this?

Food for thought: “We read in verse 8 ‘Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.’ These words give us the impression that God is as it were waiting for the revelation of the man of sin. And as soon as he is fully revealed God will strike him down swiftly. His rule will be brief and his destruction takes place in a moment. Notice the Lord shall take him away, destroy, and annihilate him. The ‘lord’ is here the Lord Jesus Christ, He, the Lord of glory is the Judge. It is Christ destroying the Antichrist, the Lamb annihilating the Beast. And that will be also the beginning of the final deliverance and salvation of the righteous. Let it not escape your attention that the text informs us about the great ease wherewith the man of sin shall be destroyed. There is no struggle, no fight, and no effort on the part of the Lord. He will kill, annihilate him by the spirit or breath of His mouth. As He opens His mouth He as it were blows him away, kills, consumes, and destroys him. And don’t forget that these things were written for the comfort of God’s people. In the second place notice how it is said that the Lord shall destroy, bring him to naught with the ‘brightness of his coming.,’ the idea is here the ‘appearance,’ the breaking through (Like the sun breaks through the clouds) of His parousia or coming. The destruction of the man of sin is the very first thing that will take place when the parousia of the Lord breaks through. It is but the beginning of the breaking through, other things must then still take place, like the judgment of the ungodly and the final judgment of His own, but the full breaking through, which shall blossom out into the glories of the new heaven and the new earth, is sure to come and shall then be imminent.” J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Judgment of the Man of Sin and His Adherents

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\_Day 7 cont\_\_\_

To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:8

“When shall the Lord destroy the man of sin?

At the very end of history, when all things are ripe for it.

When all the elect are called in to the fold,

When all things are ripe.

The Lord does not come before the time,

 and before all things in heaven, earth, and hell are ready.” (J.D.)

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\_Day Eight\_

They Received Not the Love of the Truth.

Today we will look into why some will believe Antichrist’s deception.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12 - Study Guide page 61

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Matthew 24: 5-13

Do: 1. Susceptibility for deception (#5. Pg. 61)

 Why are some made susceptible for deception? (Q. 5.a pg.61)

 Verses 10 & 12

1. What does it mean that they ‘received not the love of the truth’?

3. How are walking in error and living in sin related? (vs. 12) (Q. 5.b. pg. 61)

 see Matthew 24:11&12

Food for thought: “The lives of the wicked are characterized by this one fundamental principle that they did not receive the love of the truth. And because of this, they receive from God a strong delusion, which delusion results in their following after Antichrist and worshiping the beast. What does it mean that they received not the love of the truth? Notice, the text does not say that they received not the truth; rather, it emphatically states that they received not the love of the truth. What does this mean? The truth is revealed in Scripture. This is the truth of God Himself as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ as Jehovah God Who saves His elect people through the blood of the cross. Now, although this truth has many implications, all of which are found in Holy Writ, the emphasis here falls upon the fact that this world is God’s creation, God’s house, and that in this creation God works His eternal purpose which will culminate in the coming of Christ. God, not Satan, is supreme in the world. God is sovereign and His kingdom, established through Christ, is the true and everlasting kingdom. The command of Scripture is to love the truth of Scripture.

And this command is urgent and necessary for to love the truth is to love God and His Christ Who are revealed in Scripture. But one manifests his love for God and Christ revealed in Scripture by maintaining the truth in all its purity against all the world, and even in the face of persecution. When one maintains the truth, stands for it, confesses against all the lie this glorious truth, when one fights for it with all his strength, he does this because he loves God and Christ revealed in it. The love of God and Christ revealed in the scriptures is a love for the truth of the Scriptures. But the wicked do not receive this love of the truth according to this text. They do not obey the command of Scripture to love the truth because their hearts are filled with hatred of God. It was not that these men did not know the truth. They know what the truth is… But they deliberately and consciously turn their backs to this calling. They scorn and mock it and refuse to make it their confession.”

Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Destruction of the Lawless One.

To take with you today: Psalm 119: 33& 34

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 \_Day 8 cont\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“Teach me, O Lord, Thy way of truth, and from it I will not depart;

 That I may steadfastly obey, give me an understanding heart.” Psalter # 325 st. 1

\_\_Day Nine\_

That They Should Believe a Lie

Today we take a closer look at the meaning of verse 11, and the delusion which God sends the reprobate.

II Thessalonians 2:11 - No Study Guide

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Psalm 73:18 Isaiah 6:9-13 Romans 1:25&26

Do: 1. For what ‘cause’ does God send them strong delusion?

1. What delusion does God send them?
2. How then, can we say God is not the cause of their unbelief?

Food for thought: “Our text tells us that God punishes sin with sin. We read: ‘And for this cause God sends them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.’ In other words, there is a causal relation between not receiving the love of the truth and God sending them strong delusion. They love the lie and want the lie, and God makes them believe the lie. That’s a frightful judgment, my friends. It is the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart on a grand, unprecedented scale to force the issue as it were, to bring things to a climax and that while God at all times maintains the full responsibility of man. And this is not what some have called, or please to call, the withdrawal of a so-called common grace. God withdraws nothing but He hastens as it were the process whereby sin comes to its culmination. He punishes sin with sin. An awful reality but nevertheless Scriptural. Don’t say that this makes God the author of sin – the very thought of it perish. But it certainly is a punishing of sin with sin, a judicial act of God. They do not receive the love of the truth but they do love the lie. And because of this God sends them an energy (that is a working toward a certain end, according to God’s design, and not a question of God’s so-called permissive will) of delusion, wandering, error, false opinion and judgment. God gives them, so to speak, the very desire of their heart, He gives them what they want. And it is awful but just when God gives evil man what he wants. He wants the lie and God sends him an energy of delusion so that he believes the lie as though it were the truth…Sin bears its punishment in itself. When it has had its perfect work, we see that it has been executing a judgment of God more awful than anything we could conceive. The error works with ever greater power in their souls and they believe the lie.” J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Judgment of the Man of Sin and His Adherents

Second Food for thought: “Those who will not receive the love of the truth are given a spirit of delusion so that they believe the lie. They are blinded completely so that they cannot see the truth at all. This is a dreadful thing, for it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. In just judgment for their refusal to receive the love of the truth, they are blinded by God so that they cannot even see the truth any more. They are so completely deluded that the truth seems to them utter folly and the lie seems to them the only possible truth. They become subjectively convinced in their own soul that the lie is the only truth that there is. This is God’s sovereign work. He does this in His righteous wrath against the wicked. He, in His anger, punishes those who will not receive what His Word clearly says…. When the final manifestation of this power in the Antichrist comes, they follow blindly after him. There is no other possibility.

Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Destruction of the Lawless One Continued..

To take with you today: Romans 1:25&26

“In contrast to all this is the blessedness of the people of God.

The people of God are those who receive the love of the truth.

They maintained the truth even when almost everyone else denied it.

They maintained their faithfulness when it meant standing alone for the cause of the truth.”

 Prof. Hanko

May we strive to love and maintain the truth with which we have been blessed.

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\_Day Ten

Recognizing the Antichrist

Today we look at signs of delusion in our time and recognizing the Antichrist.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12 - Study Guide page 61

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Matthew 24:11-25 Revelation 13:15-18

Do: 1. Mention evidences of this delusion in our time. (Q. 5.c. pg.61)

2. Trial of the believers (#6. Page 61)

 How will the believers be sorely tried? (Q. 6.a. pg.61)

 See Matthew 24:21&22

 Revelation 13:15-17

3. How will they be able to recognize the deceiver? (Q. 6.b. pg.62)

 See Revelation 13:18

**Food for thought:** “Secure by the Word: Does this leave the elect believer defenseless? Not at all. He will be able to identify and reject Antichrist, as now he is able to identify and reject the many false christs and false prophets by the Word of God, Holy Scripture. Antichrist is a liar. He contradicts the Scriptures, openly and plainly. The man or woman who knows and loves the truth of Scripture can easily detect him and see through his deceitfulness and such a man or woman will certainly reject him. The defense of the church is the Word of God. The Word is a sure defense. Antichrist will fail. His failure is certain because he opposes God, the Almighty. God stands over against this creature, not struggling for mastery but laughing and having that speck of dust in derision. Antichrist’s failure is certain because he pits himself against Jesus the Christ. Christ has died and risen again. He sits in sovereign power on God’s right hand as Lord of lords, Antichrist included. Antichrist will fail as regards his purpose to deceive the elect. Jesus teaches this when he says, “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” “If it were possible!” That is, it is *not* possible. It is not possible to deceive *one* elect. For they are the chosen of God. Their salvation is as sure as God’s eternal decree. Their salvation depends only upon God and His love. Since He is almighty, unchangeable, and faithful; their salvation is sure. This is the comfort of the believing people of God in the midst of the great spiritual conflict now going on. This is their strength to withstand Christ’s enemy.”

 Prof. David Engelsma in the Standard Bearer article: The Coming of Antichrist

# To take with you today: II John 7&8

## “The man or woman who knows and loves the truth of Scripture

 **can easily detect him and see through his deceitfulness,**

 **and such a man or woman will certainly reject him.”** Prof. Engelsma

## A strong reason for us to strive more and more to know and love scripture!!

\_Day Eleven

Believers Not Deceived!

Today we see why it is that believers are not deceived.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12 - Study Guide page 62

Read: II Thessalonians 2: 6-12 Matthew 24: 13-24 I Peter 1:1-5

Do: 1. What does Jesus advise believers to do when they see the abomination of desolation?

 (Q. 6.c.pg.62)

 See Matthew 24:16-18

2. What does that mean for believers today? (Q.6.d.pg.62)

3. Why are believers not deceived? (Q.6.e.pg.62)

 Matthew 24:13&24

 I Peter 1:5

4. What should be their attitude toward the lawlessness - abortion, sex outside of marriage, homosexual practices, divorce, remarriage, and the like - evident in our day? (Q.6.f.pg.62)

Food for thought: “The critical danger for the church today is exactly the reality called Antichrist. There is a danger that the church, as it were, posts a lookout to scan the horizon for Antichrist, so that the lookout can warn the people of God when the enemy has arrived and sound the warning to give battle… God’s call to His people is to oppose the Antichrist now. We are not saying here that the Christian’s calling is to be ready to oppose Antichrist when he comes, urgent as that calling is. We are saying that our calling and the calling that we urge you to carry out is this: Oppose the opposer of Jesus Christ presently. Not someday, but today. It is possible to oppose him now, for he is present now… The struggle of the people of God against Antichrist has always been and will always be a present struggle. The call to oppose Antichrist must always be given in the present imperative. Whether in the future the church’s children (your children and my children) are able to withstand the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, depends, to a great degree, on the success of the battle we wage against his spirit today…We oppose all that opposes Jesus Christ. We oppose humanism that exalts man and promotes the cause of man and man alone. This is why Reformed believers from the beginning have maintained that it is necessary for them to maintain good Christian schools in which their children are educated. The world inculcates its young with humanistic values and humanistic goals, and we must have no part of that mis-education… There is even a widespread notion abroad, showing itself also in Reformed circles, that all the pagan religions are legitimate, nothing other than the expression of the universal religious feelings of mankind that probably find their best expressions in Christianity. Witness the Protestant preachers praying with Muslims. The basis for that is Humanism. The church of Christ today opposes Antichrist by giving battle to those notions and ideas prevalent in the church today.”

 Prof. Barry Gritters in the pamphlet: The Antichrist

To take with you today: I Peter 1:3-5

“The truth of the Antichrist is dreadful. The church must suffer under him, too.

But we are not to fear for a moment.

And when you see the Antichrist in the future, be not in terror.

For in that darkest hour the world has ever known,

we will be doing the same as we have all our lives,

 waiting ‘with uplifted heads’ for the coming of Jesus Christ,

 Who will redeem us from all distress.” Prof. Gritters

\_\_\_Day Twelve

 ­Pleasure in Unrighteousness

Today we look at the evil of having pleasure in unrighteousness.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12 - No Study Guide

Read: II Thessalonians 2:6-12 Romans 1:24-32 II Peter 2:12-14

Do: 1. Who are ‘they all’ who will be damned?

1. Why is it that a child of God will not have pleasure in unrighteousness?
2. These verses describe the reprobate. Thankfully we are elect. Take some time to look at these blessings you receive because of God’s grace; to consider what they mean in your life; and examine yourself to see how they reveal themselves in your life.

 I am elect and redeemed in Christ.

 Because I am elect and redeemed in Christ,

 I have been given:

 to know the truth

 to believe the truth

 and to love the truth

 and to have no pleasure in unrighteousness

Food for thought: “Those who perish, who are adherents of the man of sin had pleasure in unrighteousness. That’s their life, their element, their nature. That also implies that they approve of, consent to and have pleasure in the works of the man of sin who is the very personification of iniquity. He is their greatest hero, they fully agree with him, they admire and worship him. They have pleasure in unrighteousness, falsehood, the lie itself. – that’s why they do not believe the truth. The adherents of the man of sin will receive their just and final judgment. But that judgment cannot be executed till the cup of iniquity is filled to overflowing, till sin has reached its utmost limit. God through Christ will judge. He will damn all the workers of iniquity, the whole world, all the adherents of the Antichrist when they shall have fully shown that they love the lie and hate the truth. And the very fact that they adhere to the man of sin and hail him as the Christ, their Savior, is the final supreme sin of the world. Therewith they reject God and God’s Christ and God’s salvation and His way of salvation. Then the sin of man has reached the consummation of iniquity and everything will be ripe for the final judgment, then things can go no further. God’s righteousness requires divine and final judgment, for God is just indeed.”

 J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Judgment of the Man of Sin and His Adherents

Second Food for thought: “(The wicked) know it is their calling to walk in obedience to the Lord Christ, to bow their knees to Him and to worship Him alone but they deliberately and consciously turn their backs to this calling. They scorn and mock it and refuse to make it their confession. There is one basic reason for this, according to the text: they have pleasure in unrighteousness…They love their unrighteousness. They delight in the pleasures and lusts of the flesh. And because obedience requires that they forsake all this, they deny the truth. ‘For this cause’ we read, ‘God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned. But in contrast to all this is the blessedness of the people of God. While this is not specifically mentioned in the text, the apostle refers to this in the verses which follow.”

 Prof. H. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Destruction of the Lawless

 Continued

\_Day 12 cont\_

To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:12

“God’s cause through Christ triumphs.

The kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ;

And He shall reign forever and ever.

In that kingdom the saints shall rule with Christ world without end.

May God grant us grace to be faithful unto the end that no one take our crown.”

 Prof. Hanko

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\_\_Day Thirteen\_

 Review of II Thessalonians 2:1-12

Notes for this review were taken from the above listed Reformed Witness Hour sermons, and

the commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, Brown.

**2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.**

**2:6 And now ye know** (the Thessalonians knew, probably because Paul told them) **what withholdeth** (what thing kept the antichrist back from coming) **that he might be revealed in his time.** (in order that he can be uncovered at the time God has appointed.)

**2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.**

**2:7 For the mystery** (that which is now hidden) **of iniquity** (of lawlessness – defiant rejection of God’s law) **doth already work:** (works or is energized already) **only he who now letteth will let,** (he who now restrains the antichrist by the providence of God, will restrain) **until he be taken out of the way.** (until by the providence of God, he who holds back will be stopped and the appointed time of the full manifestation of the Antichrist will come.)

**2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:**

**2:8 And then** (at God’s appointed time) **shall that Wicked** (the Antichrist – the fullness of sin) **be revealed,** (will be made fully known to disclose what has been hidden) **whom the Lord** (God coming in Christ) **shall consume with the spirit of his mouth,** (will annihilate him. As soon as the Antichrist is fully revealed he will be consumed. As Christ opens his mouth; he, as it were, blows him away; kills him; consumes him) **and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:** (It is as if the destruction of the Antichrist is the very first thing Christ does at His coming. With the appearance or breaking through, like the sunbeams through the clouds.)

**2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,**

**2:9 Even him,** (Antichrist) **whose coming** (whose presence as the result of his revelation or uncovering) **is after the working of Satan**  (according to the working of Satan- worked in him by Satan, who is under God’s determinative will) **with all power and signs and lying wonders,** (with power from Satan, performing imitation miracles, and fake wonders, with falsehood as their base and their aim. Signs and wonders that serve to lie for the purpose of deceiving.)

 Continued

\_\_Day 13 cont\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

**2:10 And** (and Antichrist comes) **with all deceivableness of unrighteousness** (with deceit of unrighteousness or to promote unrighteousness) **in them that perish;** (perish everlastingly) **because they received not the love of the truth,** (in just retribution for not having received the love of the truth and did not believe the truth which they had known) **that they might be saved.** (They do not obey the command of Scripture to love the truth, because their hearts are filled with hatred of God.)

**2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:**

**2:11 And for this cause** (and because they did not believe the gospel and therefore love the truth) **God shall send them strong delusion,** (God is now sending them strong delusion) **that they should believe a lie:** (God works in order that they would believe the lie of the Antichrist)

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2:12 That they all might be damned (and that they all would be eternally judged worthy of everlasting hell) who believed not the truth, (who believed not the truth) but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (but rather took pleasure in unrighteousness, the lure of sin being the great obstacle to believing the truth.)

Food for thought: “Why, from a theological point of view, from God’s point of view, must there be an Antichrist, the revelation and the parousia of the man of sin? This is necessary in order that the ultimate of sin may be manifested for the self-justification of God. All the reprobate world will see its own image in the Antichrist. There is indeed a great difference of revelation and manifestation between the sin of Adam and the sin of the Antichrist, but principally there is no difference between Adam in his first sin and the Antichrist in his ultimate sin. That’s where sin leads to with man, that’s the outcome, the final end. And all the reprobate world will acknowledge this and God will be justified in His everlasting punishment and damnation of the ungodly. A second reason why there must come an Antichrist is that God will expose the utter vanity of all power of opposition, so that His glory and power may be manifested. All man’s efforts apart from God and contrary to His law, will end in utter frustration and chaos. As we read in Psalm 2:4-6: ‘He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.’ Man does not acknowledge this now, but he will then. For the Lord shall consume him by his spirit and destroy him by the breaking through of His parousia.

 Finally, my fellow Christians, receive, always again, by grace, through faith, the love of the truth. Believe the truth, always, have pleasure in righteousness. Doing this, you will not be deceived by the man of sin, but you will be preserved by God and by God-given faith, you will persevere. And you will be saved. Therefore, long and look for the parousia, the coming, of the Lord in glory when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and be admired in all them that believe.”

 J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Judgment of the Man of Sin and His Adherents