

“The Mystery of Iniquity”

By Brother Parrish Lee

Sunday, August 13th, 2017

Amen, amen, amen, amen. It is wonderful to be back amongst our brothers and sisters; it is wonderful to be in the house of the Lord. How did that song go? You're a good, good father. I haven't heard that song outside of our worship, here. I haven't heard it in practice. I haven't heard it on the radio. This is the only version of that song that I know. And, I appreciated brother Kirk; number one, he didn't leave. He didn't just say I can't. I can't, just take off. I can't sing it the way I want to sing it, therefore, I, therefore, I'm going to withhold my worship. Now I have to say there's a difference between praise and worship. You see, you praise God, you praise Him. A praise is a thank You for what He has done for you. And, we have many things to praise God for. But, you worship God because of who he is. He is the everlasting father. Nothing changes that. He is deserving of all worship at any time, at any time. God is deserving of worship because He is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. He is over the angels. They bow down before this God that we talk about. Even the sun, as bright as it is—we're going to be having an eclipse, and they say, if you were to look at it, it could blind you. Because it is the true sunlight and He's over that. His voice is so sweet—the song that we sing—the birds hush their singing. And we, the Christians, the believers know that when he speaks to us, there ain't nothing like it. That pours in our soul from a touch from God that is above everything else. The doctors only write GOK, God only knows what just happened here. We and our families that see it before our very eyes say God only knows, He is the only one who knows. So I appreciated both brother Kirk and brother Malcolm coming up to help, because God deserves, number one, He deserves our praise, and he is the only one worthy of our worship. I was so thankful, it was such a blessing to see the young people who were up here both back here and up here, bringing forth some praises before God. The whole earth is full of his praises. And even through technical difficulties. You know, I have technical difficulties sometimes in my own house when I'm trying to get in the right spirit in the right frame of mind. I have technical difficulties. I've had technical difficulties of time or two on the road. I had technical difficulties this morning when my car wouldn't start. But God gets his praise and his worship. He alone is worthy. I just want to give the Lord one praise for that.

We have been taking it upon ourselves to look at the Books of First and Second Thessalonians, the last two months and the theme for this month is from the Book of Second Thessalonians, chapter one and verse number five:

2 Thessalonians 1:5 *Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

And our prayer is that it's been a blessing, and it's been nutritious, spiritually nutritious, and it's been satisfying for our souls. Because that is the will of God that we would be able to have our daily bread. But as we go forward, there is more to talk about. And, in the essence of this, I would like to first say that I give honor to that same God. I give honor to Him. Who distributes bountifully unto all that come unto him and without partiality. God is a good God; He knows what we need. He doesn't withhold our blessing, trying to tease us, and to prove that he is God. He blesses us just that we have air to breathe today. He blessed us; just to walk across the floor is a blessing. And, if you had something to eat today, and your eyes were open and you were able to speak today, He blessed you this morning. That is the God that we come before, that is the God that we give honor to. So, we thank Him for his mercy, his kindness, His compassion, long suffering in all His good and perfect gifts, our Savior, the Lover

of our souls. He who is the ancient of days. He who knows no beginning and no end, that God. And we give honor, this morning, to those who have gone before us, those who have towed the line. From all the way in the Book of Genesis to all the way down to today. Those in the Word and those who have been over this ministry. Our founding pastor, he and his family. And, our pastor, he and his family. And all those who stand in the gap to make up the hedge. For how beautiful are the feet of them that bring those good tidings of the Gospel of peace. And we give honor to God for all of you who present yourselves before that same God.

Today we are going to be talking about Second Thessalonians, chapter two, verses—the whole chapter. Let's just say that, the whole chapter. And as I say, that I'm going to ask our brother Alex, if he would come up and read from the Book of Second Thessalonians, chapter two, verses one through seven.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-7 *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

Thank you, Brother Alex.

Could we just bow our heads for just a moment? Almighty God, we thank You, we thank You, we thank You. And God, we come before Your presence, and we are always amazed at how good You are. We're always thankful for for what You've given to us, Almighty God. We thank You for our time of worship, for You alone are the only one deserving of praise. Worthy, the Bible says, is the Lamb. And Lord, at this point, we turn to ask for a blessing on the reading of Your Word, that it would do exactly what You said in Your word, not to return to You void, but to do and accomplish that to which You sent it. That it might feed Your people with both knowledge and understanding, to be able to provide focus and direction, and truly strength as we go. So we ask and pray and claim all this in Jesus name and everyone said amen. Amen.

Second Thessalonians chapter two. Now we had a wonderful Bible study on grace. Brother Kirk taught a Bible study on grace last Wednesday. It was a wonderful study. It is impossible to cover the grace of God in one evening. So our brother Kirk, he gave us a study to help us learn more, take us further, and learn more about that grace of this one perfect God. And it was wonderful. It was wonderful. And this whole last month and even this month, as we talk about Thessalonians. We have talked about that it began because of a Macedonian call. Because the Apostle Paul and those who were with him. Caught that vision of one that was in Macedonia saying come over to us, as they were looking to take the Gospel into all the world. Wonderful point, grace, evangelism, taking the Word to those who are without. Excellent points of Christianity, and there are times that we talk about grace, and there are times that we talk about taking the Gospel to the world. And then there are times when we learn what is in store for this world, according to God's Word. The latter of which is what we are talking about today.

From First Thessalonians, chapter two, and verse number one:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,*

We beseech you, Thessalonians, and this is the second letter, or book, unto the Thessalonians. You see the first book had caused a stir, a reaction in them. They were a young church and it had taken them to places they hadn't been before. This Christianity thing is new and so were some of the things that were in it. Some of it was actually scary to the Thessalonians. And there was some scuttlebutt going on and Apostle Paul had to write to them a second time. He says, we beseech you or we ask, or we entreat, we earnestly implore you, Thessalonians, by two things, the coming of our Lord—keep that in mind—the coming of our Lord, God is coming again. And you're gathering unto those two things. He is coming again and you are waiting for him. We entreat you, we implore you, we ask you to be attentive unto what I am just about to say. In verse number two:

2 Thessalonians 2:2 *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled...*

And we have to say, we have to say, when something is shaken, you can identify exactly when that happens. To be shook is movement caused by some kind of outside influence. That's shook. And, yes, there are times when Christians have to shake ourselves to get ourselves on track, yes, there is that. He says, But I implore you not to be soon shaken or troubled. Shaken in your mind or troubled. In other words, I don't want you to be shook, I don't want you to be moved in your mind from where God has called your mind to be, and then he says I implore you that you also be not troubled, troubled. Now shook is an immediate, acute action. But, when you're troubled, it's something far more general, far more subtle. It just seems to leach into your life. It starts out, generally, slowly, and soon gets a little this: "Ah, I don't know, hmmm. Everything isn't on par. It's not connecting. I don't feel like I used to feel." That's being troubled. So he implores them, number one, not to be shook not to be moved, and, number two, don't even let yourselves be troubled. In your mind, he starts off, don't let your mind depart from where it's supposed to be. And then he goes on to say:

2 Thessalonians 2:2 *...neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

Neither by spirit, and, yes, that is both spirits of humans, as they seek to—and we've seen both the angry spirits, we've seen manipulative spirits, we've seen sneaky spirits, we've seen lustful spirits, any spirit that would come along and try to move you. A human spirit. And, we've seen people here come to argue against the case of Christ, so many different ways. Or Superhuman spirits. This is actually talking about both. Not to be moved. If an angel comes along to tell you, Jesus was not right. That is not the angel to listen to. Or he says, by word. And, word, in fact, is that, the word of people's responses. Questioning, debating, loosing something into your presence that could cause you trouble, that could cause you to be moved. Or, as by a letter from us. And, he's saying that, yeah, there are things in the Word that you haven't been used to hearing, that you haven't seen before. I'm talking to you Thessalonians, but don't let these things shake you. You have the ability to have great confidence. You see, they, the Thessalonians, at this point, they had heard this Gospel, and they knew about the crucifixion of Jesus. They were under the leadership of Caesar. They were expecting Christ to come any minute, any minute. And they wanted to make sure that they hadn't missed it. They wanted to make sure. And the way Apostle Paul was talking, they wanted to know that they didn't discover was that the Trumpet had sounded, and they didn't hear it, and some of you have already left. And they wanted to know, but no, no, no, that didn't happen. And, so Apostle Paul writes to them, saying, "No, don't be shaken nor be troubled." And he goes on in verse three, and he says:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *Let no man deceive you...*

And we are not going to cover everything because everybody has to go home, and they have to work. Everybody has food to eat tonight or whatever else, and people have devoted so much time to this, because this is so incredibly rich. We could not possibly cover it all in one service, the whole chapter, but it is a chapter that we need to touch, and listen to, and be instructed of, and we will draw nutrition from this for the rest of our lives, for the rest of our lives. But, then, again, in verse number three, if we could get back to that:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...*

These are the type of messages you won't hear about all the time, these are the type of warnings that are put out in their scriptures that are not popular in the world, these are the ones that they say you have to stay away from. But, as we go through the Book of Thessalonians, there is a reason why Apostle Paul had to write to them under the unction of the Holy Ghost to tell them, don't be deceived:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

Falling away, if we can talk about that for just a moment. Falling away, falling away is exactly what—it is a departure, a falling away is a departure. And, also, a separation, it is a separation from something. Falling away, a departure, a separation, a separation from what? Now, this was written somewhere around 70 A.D. to the Thessalonians. This was written that long ago. And, he was then talking about falling away. Since then, what could possibly be this falling away? A falling away from morality. A falling away from faithfulness. A falling away from there being a standard of what is right. A falling away, a falling away. Don't be deceived, that day shall not come except there come first this: a falling away.

We had the opportunity, yesterday, we were with a youth group and they watched a movie. And the movie was God's Not Dead Two. God's Not Dead Two. It was a great choice. As a matter of fact, the ones that were up here were the ones that suggested it. They talked about it, they had to bring the different points, and Jennifer and Angelo were talking about the need to see the movie. And we saw it and it talked about a young woman who was a Christian who was on trial for her convictions, on trial because of her convictions. And you got a chance to see that even, at one point, they were saying you can't even say God in schools, let alone mention Jesus, let alone there is no prayer, and they wanted to go over her life. "Have you prayed with anybody? In school, have you mentioned? Have you invited people out to church in school? What if you done as far as religion goes in school?" A falling away because, you see, school, in this country started in church. It started in church. It started in church. And now schools have gotten so big that they don't want the church at all. And, they even took an excerpt, somebody did, they took an excerpt out of a letter completely out of context, to say we need to make sure that there is a separation between the church and those things of the state. Which was supposed to be that the state didn't tell you how you could worship. You had freedom to do that. But it's been turned around to say we don't need to do anything to do with God, anywhere around anything to do with the state. That is completely against the way this whole thing was set up. But you see there had to be a falling away. There had to come a falling away, first.

When we talk about this falling away, this also goes on to say, that man of sin, the son of perdition be revealed, that man of son, the son of perdition be revealed. This as he spoke to the Thessalonians, and this, as Apostle Paul, as Apostle Paul was sharing this with the Thessalonians, this is

not a new concept to those who know the Old Testament. In the Book of Daniel, chapter seven, and verse number eight:

Daniel 7: 8 *I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: [So this little horn plucks up the first three horns, and there's nothing left of them.] and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*

And there's many times this happened in the Scriptures, it goes on to give the interpretation of the vision in verses twenty-four and twenty-five:

Daniel 7:24-25 *And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

So it just tells you that there's three kings and this little horn was going to completely capture these other ones. This great king was going to come up, and then in verse twenty-five.

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Back to Thessalonians, Chapter two verse number four. The parallel is here. This same man of sin and son of perdition, this one, this same one. In verse number four it says:

2 Thessalonians 2:4 *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

And, lastly, one more in Daniel. Chapter 11 verses 36 and 37:

Daniel 11:36-37 *And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.*

This man of sin, this son of perdition is coming. He's talking to the Thessalonians. But these are things that have occurred that have happened before the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it the Antichrist? Is it the Antichrist? In the Book of First John, chapter two, and verse number eighteen.

1 John 2:18 *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

The book of first John written in the first century and there were already many Antichrists there. So, if we were to look, where is that one? Where is that one? We used to have a little game that we played when I was in school, they had maps, you know, and when had maps. Somebody would say, "Hey, can you find...?" they would say pick a location, and you would spend your time trying to find it. And you would always look for the smallest thing in the little nook and cranny. You would be so, they call it, tunnel-focused tunnel-vision, that you wouldn't be able to see everything, and, so, people who had played this game before, they wouldn't go for the smallest thing on the map. They would go for what you call the big picture. The big picture. And the moral of that is: Don't get so focused on the small that you miss the big picture. That is a philosophy, they have it in business, they had it in the navy, when we were there, they talked about the different accidents. They said the worst accident you could have on a ship is the loss of the big picture. "If I don't open this valve, blah blah blah, what happens? What is the big picture of what would happen?" That was the whole terminology of what would happen. And we bring that to this to show that we can't be so tunnel focused in our faith that we miss the big picture of what God has. We can see the big picture, what's going on, not just in my little house in Waukegan, but, if I stretch out the big picture, I won't just go to Waukegan. I won't go to just Lake County. I won't just go to Illinois. I won't just go to the United States of America, or North America, I'll go to the whole world, you take a synopsis of the whole world, and you see the big picture, and you'll see that it's all around us. Verse number five:

2 Thessalonians 2:5-7 *Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth- that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

The Bible says that the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of iniquity is already at work. Only He who will let, will let it. And when you look at the mystery of iniquity, it is so deceiving, it is so deceiving because iniquity makes think people think that it's going to be all right. And verse number—we have to go to the next two verses to finish this. I'm sorry, we're going to skip verses eight and nine and go to verse number ten:

2 Thessalonians 2:10 *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness...*

As he's talking to the Thessalonians, a relatively young church, he's telling them, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in other words, unrighteousness is deceiving. Unrighteousness is flat out deceiving. Nobody thinks, "Oh, if I tell a lie, you know, God's going to pour down fire upon me and I'm going to spontaneously combust." Nobody thinks that. Nobody thinks that if I just cheat a little bit. The consequences are worse than what I'm going to be immediately gratified with if I cheat on this test. And nobody thinks when they're in the groves of sin, "Yeah, this is the one that I am going to do. And it's going to be so hard for my soul to be restored. That I'm not going to find it within myself." Nobody thinks that that's why unrighteousness is deceiving. And the rest of that Scripture goes:

2 Thessalonians 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.*

And that is why. Why do they perish? Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. Because they received not the love of the truth and Apostle Paul is letting them know that this whole thing is a choice, a choice. God has given us the ability in our hands to choose the righteous way and the unrighteous way. God has given us that much power to be able to choose this. And then he lets us know the consequences. Doing the things of God, there is a reward. And doing the

things of unrighteousness, there is a reward. He's letting the Thessalonians know that if they do unrighteousness, they shall be deceived. And verse number eleven:

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

Nobody who wants to advance in any major field in society generally quotes these things. Nobody who wants to generally satisfy everything of their flesh comes after this. Nobody who wants themselves to be exalted, and the things of God, not so much, they don't refer to this, because it's so uncomfortable and so convicting and it lets you know that the actions are wrong. In verse number twelve:

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

When I first got saved this scared the tar out of me! Why? because I was just new in being saved, and I knew God had to save me from perdition. He had to save me from my iniquity. And I knew, I knew without the grace of God there would I be. Man, without the grace of God that's where I'd be and I'm brand new and I see, yeah, God is strong enough, and His things are strong enough, but, you know, I'm a sinner, just got saved. How am I going to be able to stay saved when this is in the Bible? Well number one, All I had to do was love the Truth. That clears everything up. Loving the Truth of God. You see, when I love the Truth, I don't worry about that stuff. When I love the truth, I think I can come to God, when I am heavy laden and He'll give me rest. When I love the truth, I know that He went away to prepare a place for me, that, where He is, there I will be also. When I love the Truth, I know that He went to Golgotha's Hill for me and those who believe Him. What I love the Truth, I am able to go and say that there is neither height nor depth nor principalities nor powers nor anything, anything that is able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, when I love the Truth. So, that fear went away, and I was able to say thank You, Lord Jesus for showing us Your Truth. And then verses number thirteen to seventeen:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

Every good work. And as Apostle Paul was sharing with the Thessalonians, what he was saying was, there are many things that will come, many things that will come, and I am letting you know that that's what is on the other side. There is the good, there is the good, but, do not be deceived by any means for that day of the Lord is coming and He is going to call His people home. And what a glorious day it's going to be, it's going to be awesome, it's going to be amazing. But we don't have to wait until then to be in the stead of the Lord. Hallelujah, we don't have to wait until then to be wrapped up in his arms. Thank You, Jesus. We don't have to wait until then to have the joy of the Lord be our strength. Amen. We don't have to wait until then to be endued from knowledge and power. Amen. We don't have to wait until then to learn more about that one rich savior. Amen, amen, amen. Can we give the Lord a praise?