



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

Facing the Future Without Fear

Ready: Strength for Today, Hope for Tomorrow | Part 14
Steve Lombardo | April 17, 2016 | 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12



As one of the pastors here, I'm honored, privileged and thankful to bring God's Word to you today. We are Village Bible Church so we go to the Bible as the inspired Word of God. We believe the Bible is God's revealed Word to us. When we gather together, the central thing that happens is the teaching of God's Word because we believe God changes people through the preaching of His Word. We're all about the Bible here!

Now we don't worship the Bible, but we worship the main character of the Bible, and the main character of the Bible is Jesus. If you never know the answer to a question in church, simply say Jesus. It's probably right. So I invite you to grab your Bible and turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12. This is our spiritual food for today:

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

If you don't come from a Christian background, you won't understand the next two minutes of this sermon. If you haven't been in the Christian world, if you don't know some of the inside things of Christianity—if you don't speak "Christianese"—this is going to be difficult to understand.

In the same way, if you did grow up in a Christian home, you're going to understand the things I'm going to talk about. But if you didn't and if you're new to Christianity or you're new to the church or you're not a believer, we're glad you're here, but you're not going to understand exactly the way that a Christian culture would understand these next few things. Here's what I'm talking about: the End Times is a big topic. The idea of the day and the time when Jesus Christ returns is a big deal. In Christian homes there are lots of discussions about the End Times. There's talk about the timing of when Jesus will return.

I remember in my family wondering, "Is Jesus going to return today? He might very well." That's a good question to ask to help motivate you to live your life for the Lord Jesus Christ. But there's a lot of speculation that happens. In 1988 Edgar Whisenant wrote a booklet titled *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*. That book sold over four million copies. Jesus didn't return in

1988 so he wrote a sequel, predicting that Jesus would return in 1989. I'm not kidding. And it sold 10,000 copies. Ten thousand people still bought that second book. So there's a lot of speculation.

Talk of the rapture, which is the idea that Christians will be caught up in the air—caught up to heaven by God—when Jesus returns, was a big deal. The way I was raised, this rapture was going to take place before a set tribulation period which could happen at any moment. As we're going to see in this text, being raptured is going to happen at the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation. Many of us have different beliefs regarding this which is why we hold this view with an open hand.

I was taught that we are going to be caught up—raptured—before everything gets really bad. I remember coming home when I was 10 years old and nobody was home. Everybody was supposed to be home. I thought "What if the rapture happened?" So I got on the phone and called my dear godly grandmother. Ring ... ring ... ring ... ring ... ring. She didn't answer. "The rapture surely must have happened." So then I called a church elder who lived down the road and he answered right away, so I was good. Or, maybe the rapture happened and he didn't go either. Oh, then we were in trouble!

Another major topic about the end times is the antichrist. Who is the antichrist going to be? In this text, Paul even describes what the antichrist is going to be like so you can recognize him. Now for the Thessalonians who are getting this letter from Paul, they might have an idea of who the antichrist could be. Think about the first century. Who was the world power at the time and who was the emperor on the throne? Yes, Nero was on the throne and people thought he was antichrist for sure. Now you think ISIS is bad? History tells us that Nero probably started the fire in Rome which almost consumed the whole city in the year 64 A.D. Then he blamed Christians for it. So they gathered up Christians—people who claimed the name of Jesus Christ—and sewed animal skins on them and threw them into the arena to let wild animals tear them apart, limb by limb. He also crucified Christians. He burned Christians alive and put them on stakes in his garden, set them on fire so his guests could see by the light. Definitely an anti-Christ, but not *the* antichrist.

Let's fast forward to the last century. Adolph Hitler tapped into the despair and degradation that Germany faced coming out of World War I and he came to power in the Nazi regime. As his abusive power was rising, a Lutheran pastor by the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer prophetically stated, "Should the leader allow himself to succumb to the wishes of those he leads, he will always seek to turn him into an idol. Then the leader will gradually become the image of the misleader. This is the leader who makes an idol of himself and his office, thus mocking God." Bonhoeffer was executed just days before the liberation of his concentration by the Allied Forces. Hitler was definitely anti-Christ based on the atrocities of World War II.

What about the last 30 years? Who do some Christians think the antichrist could have been? In my day—the '80s—what about Gorbachev? I mean, I thought he could be. He already had the mark of the beast on his forehead. Our two countries were going through the Cold War. I really thought he could be. But he's not the antichrist. I don't even know where he stands with the Lord. Maybe he's a believer. That would be cool.

So we speculate about these things and this has led to push-back from the millennial generation against this idea of the End Times, so much so that passages like the one we're in today just get skipped over. Here's the cool thing about Village Bible Church. We go through all the passages of Scripture, verse by verse, including the hard ones. How many know that Pastor Tim doesn't sugarcoat things? So we're going to go through these hard verses together and wrestle with this text. Most people just think, "We don't know what's going to happen so forget about the end times. Forget about what is to come and forget about the passages that deal with it."

Some of the struggle and the angst felt regarding this topic is rightly captured in an article in *Charisma News*, by Jessilyn Justice. She wrote an article entitled "Why Millennials Are Turned Off by All the End Time Talk" and states this:

I'm from a generation that looking to our future—the days to come—can be intimidating when the headlines are full of despair. The more stories I read about the gut-wrenching attacks against Saed Abedini, unborn children, Coptic Christians or even US citizens who don't want to bake cakes for someone they don't agree with, the more I wonder just how close we are to Christ's return.

Any of you think those thoughts? She goes on:

Tack those observations onto the blood moon and other patterns and my head starts to spin. Whether or not we are at the end of times I do not know, but what I know is that we need an appeal to heaven with a sense of hope and only God can change our condition. When we talk about the end times I think there's a sense of fearmongering that exists in the form of warnings. Someone close to me once confessed that she grew up believing she would never get married, have children, or live even to her 20th birthday because the antichrist

was coming. Trust me when I say this friend is alive and kicking well past those milestones and looking forward to many more. But until she conquered her fear and realized that Christ is still on the throne, she couldn't live the life that He planned for her. When we live in a state of fear about the future, we hinder ourselves from celebrating what Christ can do in the here and now and how we can affect the future for His glory.

I think she's right.

So we come to this text which is not about the antichrist. This text is not written to bring about fear, rather just the opposite. It is to give us hope and courage and peace and strength because God is in control, because Christ is on the throne, and because in the end He wins. And those who are found in Christ get to share in His victory.

So here's the big idea: God gives us the truth about the future so we can live with hope and peace in the present. Let's start with the situation in which we find ourselves.

1. The Situation

Let's catch up with Thessalonica and the church there. Pastor Tim has been talking about this church and we've learned a lot about the people, where it was located, what was going on, the work that God was doing.

Even though the Thessalonians were experiencing persecution, their faith and love were growing abundantly.

So just a quick reminder: they were growing in their faith even though they were being persecuted. They were loving one another and serving one another even though it was hard. Paul states, *"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing"* (1:3).

This was a great church.

This was a growing church. We don't know about the numbers, as Tim stated a couple of weeks ago. They might not have been on the "fastest growing churches" listed by *Outreach Magazine*, but they were a great church. This was a growing church. By the way, we had a record-breaking Easter here at Village Bible Church across all four of our campuses. About 1,400 people came to hear about the risen Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Very cool. Here at Sugar Grove we had nearly 1,000 people. That's a record for us and that's something to be excited about. God brought people. God drew people in. But if people don't come to believe in Jesus Christ, if people don't come and repent of their sin, if people don't come and grow in their faith, if people don't come and be changed by the gospel of Christ, then who cares what crowd you draw. Big deal. A thousand people.

You can draw thousands of people to stuff that doesn't have any eternal significance. So the proof is still in the pudding for us. Are we going to have a church that is growing in our faith and in love? Or are we drawing a crowd merely to have the numbers and say, "Look at the crowd we can draw"? Our goal in drawing a crowd is to point them to Jesus for salvation and sanctification. When that happens, man, that's a great church. I think God's doing that in our midst and it's exciting to be part of it. Are you excited to be part of God's church here? That was the situation in Thessalonica.

2. The Deception: False teaching that Jesus had already returned (2:1-5)

Paul says that some of them were saying that Jesus Christ had already come and gone. The implication of this false teaching was that He came and He forgot about you. "He's forgotten about you Christians in Thessalonica, you who are growing. God is at work obviously and now you're alarmed because you think maybe Christ has come and gone and left you behind."

It's hard for us to comprehend how that communication happened in the first century. Our lives are so much different. We have the worldwide web at our fingertips. We have tablets and computers and phones and TVs. I want Amazon Echo for my birthday. You can talk to "Alexa" and she tells you everything. She tells you the temperature. You can turn on your car. Make a to-do list. If you watch the commercial, you'll be impressed by this little device. You can even order pizza. That was the one that sold me.

But in the first century, information didn't travel like that. Two thousand years ago if you wanted to send a message to somebody, you would have to send it with a courier or a merchant who was already going that direction. And there was no guarantee that it would get there. There was no confirmation of delivery and it could take weeks to months, and it often did. Then when rumors started it was hard to stop them because people wouldn't know what the truth was because they couldn't

find it out for months. So evidently this was happening in Thessalonica. The deception was that Jesus Christ had come and gone again, and that He left them. This is what they're being told.

This deception can rob us of our peace...

Now this deception—this false teaching—can lead us to believe that Christ isn't coming back again. This mentality would rob us of our peace. Because everything that we believe hinges on the truth that Jesus was raised from the dead and that Jesus is returning. This truth gives us peace in the gospel, knowing Jesus Christ saves us from sin, that Jesus died for our sin and that He rose again. Remember these two "R" statements which go together: Jesus Christ has been raised and Jesus Christ will return.

Take your Bible and turn to 1 Corinthians 15:12–19. I'm tying the resurrection into the return of Christ because they go hand in hand. Paul was writing about the resurrection of Christ:

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Jesus is coming and that gives peace to those who are found in Him. Let me give you some things that the promise of the return of Christ gives us:

The promise of Christ's return gives us peace—in the good times and the bad times.

If Christ has not been raised, the implication is that He's not going to return. He's not coming again. Then what are we doing here? It's a beautiful day outside. We could be doing yard work. If Christ has not been raised, if Christ is not returning, then why are we singing songs? I mean, what a joke if it's not true. See, this is not a hope-so or a fairytale. This is rooted in historical reality and truth that Jesus lived, died, rose from the grave and is coming again. This is what we believe and this is what we hold onto. This gives us peace, even in the midst of all kinds of circumstances.

I remember when my Dad, who was a pastor, would leave sometimes for weeks of revival meetings and things like that. He would travel and it always seemed like stuff would go wrong when Dad was gone. But there was always the promise that Dad was going to come home and then it would be made right. Things would be okay because Dad would be coming. Now there's a flip side of this, too. Dad's coming home, so you're going to get yours if you deserve it.

The promise of Christ's return gives us hope—the grave is not the end.

We didn't see the risen Savior, Jesus Christ. Some of His followers got to see Him. Over 500 people got to see the risen Savior. We didn't get to see Him, but He's coming again. There's a day when we will see Him face to face and that gives us hope because the grave is not the end.

One of my first funerals as a pastor was for a baby who only lived ten days. I was at the hospital with the family and the little guy was holding on as best he could. It was so hard seeing him with all the tubes and cords. Well, we had the visitation and memorial service at the funeral home, his little body there. I was just overcome with emotion, seeing that little white casket and knowing my second child was about the same age. Everything in me hurt. This is wrong. I can still feel it now. It's evil. It's wrong. It's just not right. But the return of Christ gives us hope because that little white casket isn't the end. Your casket is not the end. The return of Jesus Christ says there's more yet to come.

The promise of Christ's return gives us strength—our bodies will be remade.

What a promise this is! Second Corinthians 4:16 says, "*So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.*" Do you have outward parts that are getting old and wasting away? That's okay. He's renewing you day by day; you're getting stronger and you're getting better. This gives us hope because we get a super body in the end—it's a resurrection body. We talk about our "super body" with our kids. You're going to get a super body someday. It's like Jesus. It's the body that Jesus had. It's a real body. But it's really different.

Jesus was recognized by His disciples. He talked with them. He ate with them. They could touch Him. They could feel Him. He could appear and then He could not appear. It was miraculous. We don't know it all. He had a supernatural body. This is a

promise for us: even when this body wastes away and gets old, there is a new body that is coming. We're going to have a resurrection body that doesn't get cancer. We're going to have a resurrection body that doesn't get old. We're going to get a resurrection body that cannot be killed. The return of Jesus Christ gives us strength.

The promise of Christ's return gives us closure—justice will be meted out.

There's coming a day for justice. There's coming a day for judgment. There's coming a day for accountability. And that's a good thing.

Back in the early 2000s, while I was just starting at Trinity Seminary in Deerfield, my brother was taking a six-month course at the Great Lakes Naval Station for Navy Seals. One night we were going to go out to eat and watch a Bulls game, along with one of his buddies. We didn't know the area around the base in North Chicago was kind of rough. When the game was over, we were going out back to the car and a guy came out and was talking to my brother and his buddy, saying something about the Navy and trying to start a fight. You don't have to try very hard to start a fight with Navy Seals, by the way—they're ready to fight. All I remember is a van came screeching into the parking lot and several people poured out of it. I got hit one time and didn't know what to do. I'm not a Navy Seal. I just wanted to run.

I was yelling, "The police are here! The police are here!" I thought that might get them to stop. Well, it didn't. I remember seeing my brother drop to the ground with people surrounding him, stomping on his head. The same thing happened to the other guy. I thought, "They're dead." Well, they lived and had to go to the hospital with great damage to their faces. My brother couldn't breathe through his nose for months. I remember going home and talking to my mom and dad about what had happened. A friend of the family was there—a great Christian man who is also a Vietnam vet. He said, "Let's get some guys together and find out who did this." I understood his heart, because everything in me wanted vengeance too. Something was wrong and I wanted to make it right, except I'm not God. Romans 12:19 says, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.*" Seeking revenge was not our responsibility.

Maybe you have been through a somewhat similar situation of being deeply wronged and hurt. There's coming a day of vengeance and justice for you. There's coming a day with closure for those situations. You do not need to seek it yourself. Our hope is in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His return is not a day to be feared by those who have put their trust in this truth. That's why Paul is writing, so we would not have fear but peace.

This day of justice will be terrible for unbelievers, because Jesus is strong in His righteousness and in His wrath. But for those who are trusting in Christ, this day is not a day to be feared. It's a day to look forward to; the coming of Christ will bring closure.

The promise of Christ's return gives us belonging—Thy Kingdom come.

We live in the already but not yet. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are part of His church now. We're also part of His Kingdom, but it's not here in its fullness yet. There are still caskets. There are still beatings. There are still murders. There is still evil. But there's coming a day when we're going to be part of His Kingdom. "Thy Kingdom come," we're taught to pray in Matthew 5. The promise of Jesus' return is that we have this family to look forward to, this heritage and hope.

Listen to this description in Revelation 21:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

This is our heritage! The promise of Christ's return is the promise of belonging. The new heavens and the new earth, with new bodies, will be ours forever. It's so wonderful I can't even imagine. Neither can you. "...[N]o eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). What a great thing!

By the way, if you're a funeral director, you're going to have to find a new job in heaven. If you make caskets for a living, you're going to have to find a new job. If you're a doctor, you're going to have to find a new job. If you're a preacher, I would

recommend finding a new job because you can go hear Jesus preach every Sunday. The promise of the return of Christ gives us peace, hope, strength, closure and belonging.

...And this deception can ruin our perspective.

This false teaching that Jesus Christ has already come and you missed out on all this, not only would it rob you of peace, it could also ruin your perspective. Paul says in verse five, *"Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?"* Paul had taught them that the rebellion is yet to come. He had reminded them that the end is not here yet. Jesus Christ is still going to return and certain things will happen that you will see, and then you will know His return is imminent.

But we have to have the right perspective. The Thessalonians had the wrong perspective. They had shifted to the wrong things. They had been told by either a spirit, a prophet, a spoken word or a written letter that Christ had already returned, so their perspective was off base.

I coach baseball and when we mark the foul lines we put down a string and follow it for a nice straight line. Sometimes we don't have time to do that so we just go freehand and try to make the lines as straight as possible. It really helps to find a spot in the outfield or on the fence and focus on that. With our perspective locked on we can make that line pretty straight. But if we start looking at each bump in the way that line will be all over the place.

It's the same idea Peter had when he walked on the water (Matthew 14:22–33). Jesus called to Peter, "Come walk to me." And Peter, eyes fixed on Jesus, got out of that boat and walked on the water like Jesus did. But then Peter started to look at the waves and the foam and the wind, perceiving that everything was crashing in on him and he started to sink. It's because he took his eyes off of Jesus.

The Thessalonians had the wrong perspective. They had forgotten what Paul taught them. Their eyes were not fixed on Jesus so they were thinking about the "what ifs." They forgot about the truth that was already taught to them.

3. The Rebellion.

The truth was that there was a rebellion that was going to take place before the return of Christ.

The return of Christ will be preceded by a great apostasy.

The return of Christ will be preceded by a great apostasy we see in verse three. *"For that day will not come,"* Paul says, *"unless the rebellion comes first."* There's going to be a rebellion such as we've never seen. For example, in Paul's letter to Timothy he's saying that there's coming a day when even people who call themselves Christians are going to want people that tickle their ears. There's coming a day when people will want to be told the good things—sugar-coated stuff—but not hear the truth.

There's coming a day when people will turn from all that is good and holy and righteous, and it will be like the days of Noah when the flood came in judgment upon them. Apostasy means the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief. Is this happening today? So the return of Christ will be preceded by a great apostasy. They already knew this.

The man of lawlessness—the Antichrist—will lead this rebellion as though he were God.

Paul also taught them about the antichrist, who will lead this rebellion as though he were God. This man of lawlessness is going to come up and he's not going to produce the rebellion but he's going to be the culmination of the rebellion. Things will get so bad all over the place that there's going to be this guy who is going to manage to muster all of the strength of evil apostasy and come to the forefront as the antichrist. And he's going to do some pretty amazing things. He will exalt himself against every so-called god or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God (verse four). He's going to do this with the power of Satan and actually do some supernatural things like false signs and wonders (verse nine). He's got some power and he's going to rise up at the head of this apostasy—of the rebellion of the world—and he's going to be at the forefront.

Let me give you six things we learn about the antichrist according to this text.

1. He is a person (2:3). He's *"the man of lawlessness..."* Now the spirit of the man of lawlessness exists throughout time and we see pseudo-antichrists, but this is a specific person we see from the text.

2. He is destined for destruction (2:3). You see there in the ESV he's called the son of destruction. Some of your translations read the son of perdition. Perdition or destruction—they mean he is the son of hell. He's destined to go to hell; he's going to judgment. This means his power won't last; he's going down in the end. He's called the son of perdition.
3. He will seek to glorify himself (2:4). We're created to glorify God in all that we do. When we eat a great meal we thank God for the meal, but we don't worship the meal. We praise God Who gave us the meal. We love our spouse and we're faithful to our spouse, but we don't worship our spouse. We worship the God Who gave us our spouse. But the antichrist is going to come and take all these things, seeking to get the glory for himself and take it away from God.
4. He is being restrained (2:6–7). Twice Paul says *"the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way."* There's a restraining here and commentators differ on exactly who is doing the restraining. The most accepted idea is God is doing the restraining—God's Spirit that is still at work in us. Some commentators say people are doing the restraining. That's still God in the end. The big idea is there's still a sense of righteousness, of right and wrong. There's still a sense of answering to a higher power in this world. The antichrist is being restrained right now but this is still an evil place. We're still dealing with sin. We're still dealing with sinners. But there's still a sense of hope. There's coming a day when He will come to power and there is no hope for unbelievers.
5. He will "fight" Jesus (2:8). This would be like me saying I'm going to race Usain Bolt, the Jamaican sprinter declared the fastest person ever timed. That's not a race, okay? The antichrist isn't going to get a punch in against Jesus. "...[T]he Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming." Jesus Christ comes and wipes out the antichrist. He wipes out the rebellion by the power and might of His Word. Jesus Christ is the Word of God and He's coming as the Rider on the white horse. He does the fighting against evil and He brings the justice and no one can stand. How silly that this antichrist could even think he could approach the very One Who spoke all things into existence. It's the Word of Christ that will wipe him out. That is promised.
6. He is not Satan, but will come in his power (2:9). This is the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, but it is a man of lawlessness.

One of the reasons we think Christians will be around during the tribulational period is that Paul writes these ways to identify who the antichrist is and to know that the rebellion is happening. This is all written to believers, saying here's what the day's going to look like. "Remember. I've already told you. You'll know when Christ is coming. He's not going to come and just leave. He's going to come to rule and reign."

So here's the solution.

4. The Solution

God will destroy the man of lawlessness.

It's not a fight, not even close. Jesus wins.

God will judge the unrighteous.

We've said we don't sugarcoat things here, so let me just say that you're a lot more sinful than you think. I can say that because I've said it to myself. We tend to think of ourselves as better than we are. I see my kids playing sports and I think I was so much better when I was a kid. But in reality, if I had videotape of when I played, I bet you I was worse. We tend to build ourselves up, and the reality is we hide so many things. There's so much junk and sin and garbage in our lives and that unrighteousness will be rightly punished.

But Jesus has made a way not only for you to escape punishment, but to have a relationship with the God Who created you. He's made a way for you to be forgiven. He's made a way for you to be growing in Christlikeness and righteousness. He's made a way to give you His righteousness. How? Through the death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. Believer, hold onto this truth. This is the solution. The judgment is coming but we hold onto the truth—Jesus Christ. What did Jesus say? He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). If things get worse we're going to hold onto this truth. We're not going to waiver. If they threaten—the antichrist or government or anybody—to shut up the church, we're going to hold onto this truth.

We're going to hold onto truth because the Lord Jesus Christ wins. Hold firmly to the truth in order to stand when this day comes.

The day is going to come and the fire will reveal where you stand. Some people who call themselves Christians will be part of the apostasy and the rebellion. Others will be faithful to the end. Which are you? Hold onto the truth. Hold onto Christ. He is coming back and what a glorious day that will be!

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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