



## “GODLY INFLUENCES THAT RESTRAIN LAWLESSNESS” (II Thessalonians 2:5-17)

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Intro: The lawless one is most commonly known as the antichrist. The Greek prefix *anti* has two meanings: *against* and *instead of*. He is possessed and empowered by Satan himself (Rev.13:1-2; 20:2). He is a master of intrigue (Daniel 8:23). Intrigue: to arouse the curiosity or interest of by unusual, new, or otherwise fascinating or compelling qualities; appeal strongly to; captivate; to draw or capture.

### I. THE RESTRAINING POWER AGAINST LAWLESSNESS (vv.5-8)

#### A. The Church

\* Jesus said that we are “the salt of the earth.” Salt preserves, prevents decay.

\* Though Lot compromised by leaving his tent life to live in Sodom, nevertheless his presence there was a restraining influence against the wickedness in the city, and the coming judgment upon the city (see Gen.18:23-32). Paul writes in I Thess.5:9 that God has not appointed believers to suffer wrath, and wrath is ultimately poured out upon mankind during The Great Tribulation. Those who believe in a mid-trib rapture base their belief on verses like Daniel 7:25.

\* While I believe the rapture of the church is one event that helps to hasten the rise of antichrist, I also believe it is ultimately something else.

#### B. The Holy Spirit

\* The Holy Spirit pulls back his restraining hand and allows antichrist to rise to power and Satan to enjoy one final hay day of havoc in the world before Jesus returns.

## II. THE POWERFUL DECEPTION OF THE LAWLESS ONE (vv.9-12)

\* Rev.12:9 says that the devil leads **the whole world** astray.

\* Satan is the father of lies. Nobody is a better liar than Lucifer.

- Led a third of God's angels in rebellion against God. They surely must have been convinced that Satan could pull off this coup/revolution.

- His original lie to man was about God (Eve). It was so convincing that Adam and Eve forfeited life **in paradise!** And that deception is still going on today. Satan wants to get us to live for this world, and by doing so, we forfeit a paradise that God is going to one day restore.

- He has some people convinced they are saved when they are really lost (See Matthew 7:21-23). II Cor.11:13-14 tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and he has false ministers on earth who do the same.

\* Deception increases near the end of the age (II Thess.2:9-10a; Matthew 24:24; Rev.13:3, false resurrection; 13:13-14a, fire from heaven).

\* Note: As we get closer to the end, we will see signs of "the rebellion." As I said last week, this involves people defecting from truth. Increased lawlessness does not mean no law, it just means law with no moral/biblical foundation. We are certainly seeing this more and more in America. For example, I was in Dillards at International Mall this past Monday. Illus: Charlotte (Don't say her name), the clerk who waited on me, asked me what kind of speaker I was, told her I was a pastor...she just moved in with her boyfriend, and they are looking for a church...asked her when she was going to get married, she said at least 4 or 5 years...I asked why she wanted to wait 4 years or more before considering marriage, because she was living in sin. She looked at me like I was from another planet! They are looking for a church, but evidently not a church that teaches truth. They are deceived in their life of sin...

\* Note vv.10b-11; Every time someone rejects truth, they become more susceptible to believing the lie of the enemy (Rom.1: 18-28); see John 12:37-39, would not believe so they could not believe...

## III. THE NEED TO PERSEVERE AFTER BELIEVING THE TRUTH (vv.13-17)

\* The closer we get to the end of the age, the harder it will be to stand for truth. But the Bible is clear that it is only those who persevere to the end who are really saved (Hebrews 3:12-14; 6:11; 10:39; Matt.10:22; 24:12-13).

\* See II Peter 3:17b.

#### IV. THE NEED FOR CONTINUAL GODLY INFLUENCES IN MY LIFE

\* Satan uses people to lead us astray (Matthew 18:6-7; Acts 13:6-10; Pilate and the pressure of the crowd; John the Baptist and the dinner guests, etc.).

\* There are many antichrists in the world (I John 2:18; II John 7). They are in the schools, universities, hospitals. They are doctors and lawyers, priests, pastors, religious leaders. They are people you live with, work with, are perhaps attracted to...Satan will use ANYONE he can to lead you astray...see Gal.1:8-9; Deut.13:1-4.

\* If we do not maintain godly influences in our lives we make it much easier for Satan to deceive us...see I Cor.15:33

\* I asked my secretary while I was away speaking at Liberty this past week to ask our staff what they thought the top three godly influences were in their lives on a consistent basis. Note top three on sheet.

\* Just being in this meeting is a godly influence in my life. We told our son Tanner the first two things he needed to do when he got to UCF was to find a good church and get involved, and check out a good ministry on campus and get involved. He did both right away. I also told him to stay away from women!

\* Pastor Danny's suggested top three ungodly influences:

1. Bad company (I Cor.15:33)

a. Hypocrites

b. The self-righteous

c. Rebels

2. Romantic relationships outside the will of God

- Num.25:1-2; Solomon (I Kings 11:3); Lot/Demas?

3. What we watch, read, and think about on a regular basis

- New booklet "Battle for my Mind"