

2 Thessalonians 2:15-17

Rise of Antichrist:
Do NOT be Weak

1

Introduction

Scripture states that there is a coming man of sin who will lead the world astray into a satanic false religion that will dominate the world. The Antichrist will initially look good, but then will reveal his true evil nature as he will be possessed by Satan himself.

In this last part of the chapter, Paul gives warnings and instructions in how to prepare for this period of calamity. We looked at “Do Not Be Unbelieving,” and “Do Not be Insecure”. Today we conclude our study with “Do Not be Weak.

2

2 Thessalonians 2:15-17

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

3

Do Not be Weak

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Paul exhorts the Thessalonians, to stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. He gave similar exhortations to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13), the Ephesians (Eph. 6:11, 13, 14) and the Philippians (Phil. 4:1). He wanted the Thessalonians not to be weak or vacillating but to hold their spiritual ground and keep their grip on the truth.

We also are living in troubling times. Evil abounds and persecution and violence are on the rise. If we look at the surface, it seems like evil and darkness are winning. Focus determines reality. If we focus on the despair, we too will lose heart. Paul is encouraging the Thessalonians to remember who is in charge. God is still on His throne. All things are unfolding to His purpose. Our eternal destiny is secure and no one or power can snatch us from His hands!

4

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Specifically, Paul urged the Thessalonians to stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught. “Stand fast” means to “hold your ground like a soldier and not be moved.” Some translations use the term “hold fast.”

The concept of tradition has been loaded down with a lot of cultural and religious baggage over the centuries. But Paul did not have in mind a body of extrabiblical tradition that people try to make equal to God’s revelation. The Bible condemns such human tradition (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:3, 6; Mark 7:8-9; Col. 2:8).

5

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The Greek word translated traditions literally means “things handed down” and refers here to divine revelation. Paul writes to the Corinthians “Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2).

These “traditions” were taught to the Thessalonians. Paul spent time there carefully teaching them the essential doctrines of Christianity. He has also written them letters. Therefore, He can say that they are to hold fast to that instruction that were taught, whether by word (verbal instruction), or our epistle (written letter).

6

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All believers are to hold fast to what God had handed down through Paul and the other apostles. Believers must hold fast to the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints (Jude 3; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14).

The modern believer must be careful to distinguish between that which is Biblical Truth, and that which is man made tradition. We must make sure that we “stand fast” in what is recorded for us in the pages of Scripture.

7

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So, the question is **“What does it mean to stand or hold fast?”**

Ultimately, we are to “stand fast” in the Lord! It is easy to fall into the trap of holding on to a particular doctrine and ritual. God gave us Scripture so we can know Him – to see what He has done – so we can TRUST Him.

Standing fast means being anchored! There are so many lies, pressures, and deceptions in the world. This is what the Thessalonians were facing. Satan wants to take the situations of life (good or bad) and cause you to doubt God. Like with Eve, “Has God really said....? We need to reply “Yes He has, and I am going to HOLD FAST to what He has said!”

To Stand Fast means that we need to carefully study the Bible on your own! It is not enough to just come Sunday morning. Think how much time the world spends trying to conform you into its way of thinking. You need to set aside some quality time to build your relationship with Jesus each and every day!

8

Do Not be Weak

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Paul frequently would stop and pray in his epistles to the churches (1 Thess. 3:11–13; Rom. 16:25–27; 1 Cor. 16:23). Paul prayed that God would comfort and strengthen the church. Paul understood that they could not obey his exhortation in their own strength but needed instead to depend on God's power. He expressed that balanced view of the Christian life when he wrote to the Colossians, “to this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily” (Col. 1:29).

9

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The pronoun translated **Himself** stands in the emphatic position in the Greek text, which could be translated, “Now may Himself our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father.” The pronoun governs both Lord Jesus Christ and our God and Father, viewing both as the source of comfort. That provides powerful evidence of Christ's deity; He is fully equal with the Father in person, power, and respect.

10

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Jesus and the Father loved believers from all eternity. It is a love which is permanently and irrevocably given to believers. The term “consolation” means to comfort and literally means “to call to one’s side.” God’s “consolation” is “everlasting” and gives a “good hope” that will outlast all our sorrows. This great gift is given by grace through salvation. The apostle prayed that both Jesus Christ and God the Father would comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Let’s phrase this a little different. God has given us His Word so we can know it. It brings comfort, but it does not end there. He wants to establish (to build you up) so you are able to speak and live for Him!

11

So What ...

As believers we anticipate the return of Jesus Christ. We must not be deceived, forgetful, ignorant, unbelieving, insecure, or weak. We must “hold fast” to Truth. God has loved, chosen, redeemed and will glorify us. This allows us to be strong and courageous. Listen to the story of Henry Dempsey.

12