

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – February 12, 2009

Have you noticed how the world seems to be spinning more and more out of control with bad and evil? It's not just your imagination. In today's Templates of Truth, we see how this spiraling crescendo of wickedness will climax in one diabolical regime during the end times.

Because of the severe persecution they were suffering, the believers at Thessalonica thought the day of the Lord that Paul had taught them about had already arrived. In his second letter to these Christians, Paul assured them that it had not. There would, in fact, be several major things that would happen before that ultimate time of judgment occurs. One of those things is the rise to power of a person Paul calls *the man of lawlessness* and the *son of destruction* (II Thessalonians 2:3). He will gain international acceptance and his administration will manifest the greatest deception and corruption ever known to mankind.

The evil nature that will characterize this world leader is already in place. Paul confirmed: *the mystery of lawlessness is already at work* (2:7). Not only is it already at work, it is accelerating in frequency and intensity. We see it every day with the increase in crime, the moral decay of our country, and the efforts to expunge anything having to do with God, the Bible and Christianity from public and political arenas. It is all a conditioning period, serving to lay the necessary foundation for the world's embrace of the most evil dictator ever to rise to power, *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception of wickedness* (2:9-10).

This escalating track of evil would overpower and conquer our world if God did not graciously counteract its effect with another impeding influence. In I Timothy 3:16, Paul refers to this opposite force as the *mystery of godliness*. It is that which *restrains him now* (II Thessalonians 2:6). In this chapter, Paul mentions *the apostasy* that is coming, referring to a period of time and an ultimate act of defection that will cause many to abandon belief and faith in God. To counteract this growing influence, the prophet Joel announced that during the end times, God will *pour forth of His Spirit upon all mankind* (Acts 2:17). The presence and power of God's Holy Spirit working in and through the lives of His people will *restrain* the onslaught of evil, *until (it) is taken out of the way* (2:7). When the rapture of the church removes the righteous and holy influence of God's people from physical presence on the earth, the principalities and rulers of darkness will emerge with a demonic force that will overtake the world in total perversion. These will be the darkest and most horrific days the world has ever known.

As we move toward this time, I believe the greatest falling away, of even God's people, will not necessarily be those who revert to sinful lifestyles and evil practices. It will be, rather, those who do nothing; those who petrify their spiritual power into a comfortable existence of unassuming complacency. Paul urged all believers: *make the most of your time, because the days are evil* (Ephesians 5:16). His message is clear: seize every opportunity God sends your way to preach, to teach, to sing, to counsel, to encourage, to witness and testify of the saving knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It should dominate your life's passion, pleasure and priority as a believer. It should be that which you do first and foremost in every arena of your life. Why?

Because there is not much time left. The days are progressively evil and the church age is almost complete. Satan doesn't need you to fall into sin in order to accomplish his evil takeover. All he needs you to do is nothing. There are too many of God's people who are doing nothing. They think as long as they attend church, give their tithe and live a pretty good life, they have done OK. They have been fooled by Satan into an apostasy of complacency. Get up and get to work, while we still have time!

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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