

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
August 18, 2021
2 Thessalonians 2:10-12
Them!

A 1954 movie dear to science fiction fans was entitled "Them!". It was about a nuclear apocalypse that caused mutated giant ants to war against mankind. Humans pulled together to save one another from the horrific threat of destruction. A character in the movie referred to scripture about the great menace from beasts in the end times. In our passage for today the beast spoken of in verses 3-9 is a single man and his reign is over world power. His followers are not monsters from a catastrophe but rather humanity itself who have turned against their God and bring down His Wrath through their own disobedience. Ominous though it is that we refer to these folks as "Them", we who have humbly chosen to follow Christ and accept His offer of salvation, have united under Him as brothers and sisters of each other and yet have alienated ourselves from "Them", the generation of the damned. Strong talk? Yes; but accurate to God's Word. See verse 12. Let's Dig in.

As we break down verse 10, Paul here uses a phrase decrying the 'deceit of moral wrongfulness'. Deceit is best described as a purposeful misleading through the distortion of the truth. As people pursue a selfish agenda to discard God's Law and sovereignty and satisfy the myopic drive of sinful flesh, the sickening result is the full product of self deception. Think about it. The repetitive pursuit of and engagement in sin hardens the heart against truth and righteousness. When sin is all we do then sin is all we know. We're told these folks 'received not' or refused to 'take hold' of 'the love of the truth'. Becoming a Christian changes everything. We first learn the Truth when we meet Christ. This great contrast to the constant lie of the sin in our lives shocks us into reality. Consider Peter's reaction to Jesus in Luke 5:4-9. That opening statement of right over wrong produces in us a hunger to seek truth in every area of life. Note the contrast between seeking the truth in John 4:23 and those who reject the Truth in John 8:40. We want deeper, more meaningful relationships. We expect proper behavior from self and others. We search out truth in government, science, religion and social movement. We desire truth because we love it. Ephesians 4:14-15. The world hates the truth and the light shed through it. John 3:20. It's the reason we are so divided as a species. It's the reason loved ones refuse salvation. If they accept Jesus in their lives they then must allow Him to align them with His truth. They must give personal sovereignty over to God. Immorality deceives the heart.

A sad and fearful revelation dawns on us as we consider verse 11. Does God turn on those who have turned on Him? When applying the Greek, God sends or 'dispatches' an 'efficient path to their wandering'. The Lord seems to be saying to them "If you are fully committed to leaving Me, then I will give you the means to do so." If a wayward son rejects his loving father, he may find the door brokenheartedly open to his departure. After first 'giving themselves over' to sin, God then 'gives them up' and 'gives them over' to their own folly and its consequent destruction. Ephesians 4:18-19, Romans 1:18-32. The book of Exodus reports that Pharaoh hardened his heart against God and the Jews. It is recorded 9 times. The scary thing is God also hardened the heart of Pharaoh. That is recorded 7 times. Be careful with your attitude toward the Lord and beg him to show mercy to your loved ones. He does not tolerate disobedience and though His

patience is great and His fuse is long, He will only stall His Wrath for the time and purpose He has ordained. 2 Peter 3:7-10. God help us all!

We mourn as we consider verse 12, where we contrast the unsaved taking 'pleasure in unrighteousness' with the saved who 'love the Truth. Know this though. It is not "Us vs Them". Our hearts break for the unsaved. We endeavor to see Them become one of Us. Here, learning that the glory of God, requires and demands the punishment of sinners, is a powerful lesson in fear and humility. There, but for the grace of God, go I...