

II THESSALONIANS 2:1-12 (NRSV)

(1) As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, (2) to not be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word, or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. (3) Let no one deceive you by any way; for that day shall not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. (4) He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. (5) Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? (6) And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. (7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. (8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by manifestation of his coming: (9) The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, (10) and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (11) For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, (12) so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

DEVOTION:

After reading this passage, one may propose that Saint Paul's letter to the church of Thessalonica is *still* relevant in the 21st century. As were the Thessalonians, we too are saturated and influenced by voices and teachings of various persuasions. These persuasions come to us through media such as the television, the radio, the internet, the newspapers, our families, our friends, and, yes, even from unbelievers. Some of the voices are so intense and persuasive that they tend to permeate into our own thoughts and lead us into questioning our own beliefs. We may begin to ask that, oh, so famous question of the infamous Pontius Pilate: What is truth?

Paul's letter attempts to be the *voice of truth* to his congregation. They had many concerns. One of the concerns was teachings that proclaimed that *the Lord had come*. To assure them of the truth, he told them that *before the Lord comes a rebellion will take place, the man of lawlessness will be revealed, and the breath of the Lord and His coming will slay the man of lawlessness. This man of lawlessness and others who are apparently working Satan's activities will perish.*

The unbelievers who had chosen to believe the false teachings and did not accept the love of Truth that would save them would perish. They rejected Paul's teachings, so God gave them a delusion and they believed the lies and

the unrighteousness. We cannot be fooled by the voices of untruth; we cannot allow ourselves to be deceived by false teachings. Jesus Christ is the love of Truth. The believer must be careful when one's survival depends on believing or declining the Truth. One does not want God to give *delusions* that has one believing in lies or in unrighteousness.

The *delusions* will have one believe that one's survive through unexpected economic crises depend on higher returns on stocks; foreclosures decreasing tremendously; or the employment rate reaching an all time high. What a delusion!! Do not be fooled!! It is only in one's belief in the Truth that one is assured of survival. His Truth will save us from receiving delusions from God. We need to listen to the voices and teachings that will draw us into deeper relationships with the Expected One, Jesus Christ. God's faithfulness and love for us is no *delusion*. We can depend in God during times of uncertainties!!

It is in times of uncertainties that we are tried by false expectations! Put your expectations in the Truth! Our survival is in the One whom is *Expected* to come. We must shut-out the voices and false teachings and rest in the love of His Truth. In Him we will find Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy. But most of all, we can *expect the unexpected in Jesus Christ!!*

Prayer:

Lord, may we not only expect Your coming during this Advent Season but may we expect Your reign in our lives forevermore!! This, we pray in the Name of the Expected One, Jesus Christ, Amen!!