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## Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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# Tenth Sermon on 2 Thessalonians Chapter Two

By Thomas Manton

*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*—2 Thes. 2:12.

THEIR punishment in the other world. Where—(1.) The terribleness of it; (2.) The righteousness and justice of it.

1. The terribleness: *that they all might be damned*; that is, filling up the measure of their obduration, they may at length fall into just condemnation.

2. The justice and equity of it, which is two ways expressed:—[1.] Negatively: *they believed not the truth*; that is, received not the gospel in the simplicity of it, as revealed by Christ and his apostles, and recorded in the scriptures, but wilfully, and for their interest's sake, gave up themselves to these corruptions.

[2.] Positively: *had pleasure in unrighteousness*. In the 10th verse it was, 'They received not the love of the truth;' now when the meritorious cause is repeated, there is something more added: they had a. love to, and delight in, other things, ***eudokhsante Ven th adikia***. Here two things must be explained.

1. What is ***adikia***—*unrighteousness* P

2. What is ***eudokia***—*taking pleasure* in unrighteousness?

1. What is ἀδικία—unrighteousness? Righteousness is giving every one his due; and denying them their due is unrighteousness. There is a giving man his due, and a giving God his due: Mat. 22:21, 'Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.' Righteousness is often put for giving man his due: Titus 2:12, 'That we should live soberly, righteously,' &c.; and giving

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God his due, which is worship and reverence: Ps. 29:2, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name;' and again, Ps. 96:8, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.' Now this unrighteousness here spoken of is principally meant in the latter sense. False ways of worship are the greatest unrighteousness that can be practised; for the duty that we owe to God is the most righteous thing in the world. Now, by false worship you withdraw the glory of God from him, and communicate it to another. Worship is his own proper due, both by the light of nature and scripture; and therefore the Gentiles, which had the light of nature, are said to 'detain the truth, *en adikia*,' Rom. 1:18. Why? The reason is rendered in the after verses. Ver. 23, 'They changed the glory of God into an image made like a corruptible man.' Ver. 25, 'They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.' This was their *adikia*, their unrighteousness, or injurious dealing with God. So the antichristians that had the light of scripture, though under palliated pretences, changed the truth of God into a lie, loved their own errors more than simple and plain Christianity, or the true knowledge of God, and diverted the worship from himself unto an idol.

2. They had 'pleasure in unrighteousness;' in these things they please themselves, not lapse into it out of simple ignorance and error of mind. And so the apostle parallels the two great apostasies: that from the light of nature, and that from the light of the gospel. Light of nature: Rom. 1:32, 'Not only do these things, but have pleasure in them that do them.' Light of scripture: 'Have pleasure in unrighteousness.' They are mad upon their idols and images; not only are idolaters, but delight in idolatry and image-worship: Ps. 97:7, 'That boast themselves of idols.'

Now to observe some things.

1. Errors of judgment, as well as sins of practice, may bring damnation upon the souls of men. All sins do in their own nature tend to damnation: Rom. 6:23, 'For the wages of sin is death.' And errors of judgment are sins, for they are contrary to the rule or law of God: 1 John. 3:4, 'Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin. is the transgression of the law.' Any swerving from the law is sin; and they are inductive of other sins; for 'if the eye be blind, the whole body is full of darkness,' Mat. 6:23; it perverts our zeal. There is nothing so mischievous, wicked, and cruel, that a man blinded with error will not attempt against those that differ from him: John 16:2, 'They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth

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God service.' A blind horse is full of mettle, but ever and anon stumbleth. Therefore, if a man be not guided by sound judgment, his zealous affections will precipitate him into mischief. As the Jews, that persecuted Christ and his apostles, had a 'zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,' Rom. 10:2, so the Popish zealots; with what fury have they persecuted the innocent and sincere servants of Christ! The papists would be angry if we should not reckon St Dominic a zealous man; and the poor Albigenses felt the bitter effects of that zeal, in the destruction of many thousands by inhuman butcheries and villanies about Toulouse, &c. The Lord deliver us from the furies of transported, brain-sick zealots!

2. Though all errors may bring damnation upon the souls of men, yet some more especially than others may be said to be damning; as 2 Peter 2:1, 'Some shall bring in damnable heresies.' Now, this may be either from the matter or manner of holding them:—[1.] From the matter, if destructive of the way of salvation by Christ. Some are utterly inconsistent with salvation and eternal life, as errors in the fundamentals in religion. As suppose that a man should reject or refuse Christ after a sufficient proposal of the gospel to him, there is no question but this is damning unbelief: John 3:19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' But yet we are not to say that alone damneth. There are other things necessary to salvation contained under that general truth. The scripture saith, John 17:3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' There is the sum of what is necessary to salvation: that God is to be known, loved, obeyed, worshipped, and enjoyed; and the Lord Jesus to be owned as our Redeemer and Saviour, to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the gifts of pardon and life, and this life to be begun here, and perfected in heaven. Other things are of moment to clear these necessary truths, but they may be all reduced thereunto. The truth is, the question about the matter to be believed is not what divine revelations are necessary to be believed or rejected, when sufficiently proposed, for all points, without exception, are so; but what are simply and absolutely necessary to eternal life, and these are points of faith, and practice, and obedience. The points of faith are a knowledge of God in Christ; and practice, that we be regenerated: John 3:5, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' And live a holy life: Heb. 12:14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.'

[2.] From the manner. (1.) When men profess what they believe not, and voluntarily choose error for worldly ends, though it be a less error against the scripture, and consistent with the main tenor of salvation, yet, if taken up against

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conscience, for by-ends, it is a matter of sad consequence; for this is living in a known sin. Some may be blinded for a time, out of terror and compassion, and their case is sad till they express solemn repentance; but when there is a opposition against clear light, and an obstinacy in that opposition, this man is condemned in himself: Titus 3:11, ‘Such a man is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.’ There cannot be a greater argument of a will unsubdued to God, than to stand out against conviction out of secular respects. This is to love darkness more than light, and argueth such pravity of heart as is inconsistent with faith and salvation. Some ignorant souls may hold dangerous errors, and which to others would be damnable; yet they may not actually damn them, because they do not rebel against the light; and may be retracted by a general repentance or seeking of pardon for all their known or unknown sins: Ps. 19:12,13, ‘Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults: keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.’

(2.) When they are vented by some professor of Christianity, to the seducing of others, and rending of the church, and drawing disciples after them, this addeth a new guilt to their errors, and maketh them the more damnable: Acts 20:30, ‘Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.’ These are properly heretics and ringleaders of sects; therefore heresies judgment reckoned among the works of the flesh: Gal. 5:20, ‘Emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies;’ increasing their own doom and ent?????. These, under a Christian name, seduce and lead away the church from Christ; they pervert the holy ways of God, and draw his people from serving him in spirit and truth.

(3.) When, though they should not err fundamentally, they so far. debauch Christianity, as that God giveth them up to believe a lie, and to take pleasure in unrighteousness, that is, to defend and maintain apparent corruptions of Christian doctrine and worship. Of doctrine, for it is here said they believe a lie, and they believe not the truth. Of worship, for it is said they take pleasure in unrighteousness. A party thus given up by God we should shun, as we would shun a plague or come out of Bedlam; for these men have lost their spiritual wits, and see not that which the common light of Christianity doth disprove, however they retain the name of Christians, and make a cry of the church! the church! as the Jews did of the temple of the Lord, and retain some truth among them; for such a party is here described.

(4.) When there is gross negligence, or not taking pains to know better, it is equivalent to oppoosition or standing out against light; *crassa negligentia dolus est*—

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there is a deceit in laziness or affected ignorance: John 3:20, 'They will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd;' 2 Peter 3:5, 'They are willingly ignorant. Those that please themselves in the ignorance of any truth, err not only in their minds, but their hearts. It is the duty of God's people to understand what is his will: Eph. 5:17, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' And it is their practice Rom. 12:2, 'That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;' Ps. 12, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night.' We should be searching still. But when men will not know what they have a mind to hate, it argueth a secret sore, and suspicion of the truth, and are loth to follow it too close, lest it cross their lusts and interests.

3. That the way and errors of Popery are damnable, and it is very unsafe living in that society and combination. I prove it—(1.) Because they live in wilful disobedience to God. They violate the manifest commandments of God, while they hold it lawful to worship pictures and images, to make pictures of the Trinity, to invoke saints and angels, to deny laymen the cup in the sacrament, to adore the sacrament, to prohibit certain orders of men and women to marry, to celebrate the public service in a language which ordinarily men and women that assist understand not. In all these things they offer apparent violence to God's precepts. And that their whole worship is polluted with a gross superstition; as, for instance, to worship images is expressly against God's word Ps. 97:7, 'Confounded be all they' that worship graven images, that boast themselves of idols. Worship him, all ye gods.' The scripture, you see, denounceth confusion to all worshippers of images, and they are reckoned as enemies of Christ's kingdom (for it is applied to Christ, Heb. 1:6, 'And let all the angels of God worship him') that would set up the worship and service of them in his church, in the exercise of their religion, especially those who glory in them, and boast of them, and set them forth as the glory of their way and worship. No; he disdaineth all this relative worship at or before images, which men would give unto him, and sheweth that all the powers of this world and the other, angels and potentates, should immediately worship Christ. For the second point, picturing the Trinity, God hath not only forbidden it, but argued against it: Deut. 4:15, 16, 'Take therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no similitude, when the Lord spake to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of anything male or female.' See how wary God is to prevent this abuse, and yet how boldly men practise it. For the third instance, the invocation of saints and angels, our Lord hath taught us how to repel that temptation: Mat. 4:10, 'It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;' that religious service and worship is due only

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to God. No creature can claim it without sacrilege, nor can we give it to them without idolatry. And God being so jealous of his honour, every Christian should be careful that he doth not divert it from him. They have many distinctions to excuse themselves to the world, but I doubt how they will excuse themselves to God. For the fourth particular, adoring the sacrament, I shall speak to again anon; that *is* a mean, not an object of worship. The fifth, prohibiting certain orders of men and women to marry, which the apostle calleth doctrines of devils: 1 Tim. 4:1,2, 'In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry,' &c. For the sixth, celebrating public service in an unknown tongue, it is contrary to the apostle's reasoning: 1 Cor. 14:14-17, 'For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also; else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? for thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.' For the seventh, communion in one kind, this is against Christ's express institution: Mat. 26:26,27, 'Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.' The apostle supposeth that every one can examine himself: 1 Cor. 11:28, 'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup: Now for this usurping synagogue to come as they do, with a *non obstante* to the statutes of God, who can join with them in these corruptions and usurpations without peril of salvation? (2.) That the way of Popery is damnable, because they deprive the people of the means of salvation, contrary to the express injunctions from God: John 5:39, 'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me;' Col. 3:16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns.' The saints are commended, Acts 17:11, 'In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so;' and 2 Tim. 3:15, that he 'knew the scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' This is the seed of life, food of souls, rule of faith and manners, our strength against temptations: 1 John 2:14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' Now to deprive the Lord's people of the bread of life, and word of life, what is it but to leave them to perish?

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The great charge is, they have pleasure in unrighteousness, that is, delight in idolatry, and corrupt or false worship, which is the greatest unrighteousness man can be guilty of. To evidence this, let us inquire—(1.) What is idolatry? (2.) Prove how notoriously they are guilty of it.

*First*, What is idolatry? It is a worshipping of a creature with divine worship, and whosoever giveth divine worship to a creature committeth idolatry. This proposition is evident in the scripture; as when the Israelites worshipped the calf, literal or metaphorical idolatry, they are called idolaters: 1 Cor. 10:7, ‘Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.’ And the covetous, that giveth that delight and trust to his wealth which is only due to God, is called an idolater Eph. 5:5, ‘Nor covetous man, who is an idolater;’ and in many other places.

*Secondly*, Now, that the papists are guilty of this, I prove:—1. By the several kinds of their idolatry: they have more variety of objects of worship than any society of men that ever lived in the world.

First, Angels are creatures, and that they worship angels themselves confess. They consecrate churches unto them, offer solemn prayers unto them, and own the adoring them, though an angel forbiddeth this adoration: Rev. 19:10, ‘And he said unto me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant,’ &c. And St Paul telleth us, that they that worship angels do not hold the head, Col. 1:18, 19, So that angel-worship proveth to be a damnable error.

Secondly, The adoration of saints, to whom they give religious worship, and invoke them as helpers, and honour them with fastings, watchings, and prayers, as Suarez acknowledgeth; and yet God is express that he ‘will not give his glory to another,’ Isa, 42:8. They are to be honoured indeed for imitation, but not adored for religion.

The third object is the Virgin Mary, to whom they pray more than they do to God. In the rosary there is this prayer: *Beata Maria, salva omnes qui te glorificant*—and we beseech thee to hear us, good Lady; that address, *Monstra te esse matrem*, and one divided, *inter ubera et vulnera*, the breasts of the Virgin and wounds of Christ, as if the milk of the one were as sovereign and as precious as the blood of the other. It were endless to rake in this filthy puddle: how many books are there concluded with *Laus Deo et Virgini Deiparae*?—that sometimes there is a more present relief by commemorating the name of Mary than by calling on the name of the Lord



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Jesus;—in their exclamations, *Jesu! Maria!*—how often in their *Te Deum*, *We praise thee, O Lady?*

Fourthly, Adoration of images. This is more foul than all the former, because directed to a more gross object. This is prophesied of Antichrist, that he and his abettors shall ‘worship idols of silver, and gold, and brass, and *wood*, and stone,’ Rev. 9:20. Now tell a papist of this, and they say they do not terminate their worship in the image, but in the party whom it representeth; the same said the pagan, *Non lapidem sed Jovem in lapide* ([worshipping] not the stone but Jupiter in the stone) (Julian the apostate). —But God hath forbidden bowing to or before an image.

Fifthly, The worshipping of the cross, not only by cupping, that is, bowing, cringing, but prayers. *O crux, ave! spes unica hoc passionis tempore, auge piis justitiam reisque dona veniam*—All hail, O cross! our only hope this time of passion; augment the godly’s devotion, and forgive the transgression of the guilty.

Sixthly, The bread in the sacrament; the papists give it *cultum latræ*, that worship which is due to God. Those heathens worshipped living animals, but these adore a piece of bread, kneel to it in their chapels and oratories, yea, in the midst of the streets when it is carried in procession. These are the idols whom they worship; and what hope of salvation is there in a religion where the heart is turned so much from God to the creature?

2. That they are more culpable than the heathens. (1.) As to their hypocrisy, by distinctions and veil of piety wherewith they disguise all this; for this delight in unrighteousness was called before, ‘the deceivableness of unrighteousness.’ They profess to abhor idols, and yet worship images, and make that a point of Christianity which is directly contrary to the drift of it, which is to teach us to worship God in the Spirit. (2.) As to their helps against it, the pagans were never taught to do better; though they sinned against the light of nature in worshipping God by images, yet they had no scripture, no such express prohibitions to caution them as we have from God. They pretend to believe the scriptures, yet how do they seek to evade the force of them by crafty distinctions that will never satisfy conscience, though they help to blind the mind and harden the heart. That which I urge is this, they were never prohibited from this kind of worship by their gods; but these know that it is severely forbidden by our God, and the second commandment so stareth in their faces that it is expunged out of their catechisms; and Vasquez is bold to affirm that the second commandment is ceremonial. Lactantius of old said, *Non est dubium, religio nulla est ubi cujusque simulachrum est* (It is not to be doubted, there is no worship



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where there is an idol). (3.) The Pagans did adore their gods in their images, but never was any so sottish among them to imagine that an image was to be adored with the same degree of worship as God himself; but this is the corrupt doctrine of the papists, that an image is to be worshipped with the same worship wherewith God himself is worshipped. *Imagini Christi latría debetur* ([Divine] worship is owed to images of Christ) (Aquinas); that is, the proper worship of God.

*Use 1.* To show how necessary it is to take heed that we be not found among the followers of Antichrist, since these errors are damnable. Salvation and damnation are not trifles, nor matters to be played withal. Surely we need have our eyes in our head, and not to be hoodwinked, when we are upon the brink of a bottomless gulf. Both sides lay damnation at one another's door: they, for our departing from the catholic church, out of which is no salvation, as they pretend; we, upon their departing from the catholic faith and simplicity of the gospel. Now external order is not of such consideration as faith; but when they will be able to prove that Christ hath settled this order in the church, that all his subjects should be obedient to one universal visible head, and that this head is the Pope, and therefore when their very order is an encroachment and usurpation, to depart from them is to return to Christ. Again, where is salvation most likely to be found? rather with them who seek all their religion in the scriptures, and stick there, or with those who, not contented with the apostolical doctrine contained in the scriptures, have brought in unwritten traditions as an equal rule of faith with scripture, and the sacrifice of the mass and purgatory, the religious invocations of saints, and many other enormities, and uphold these innovations with all manner of tyranny and cruelty exercised upon Christ's faithful servants? If men go to heaven without prayers which they understand, and scriptures, half Christ's sacrament, a piece of his merits, and some superstitious observances, yea, plain idolatry, then the way to heaven is sooner to be had in Popery. But he that hath but half an eye may soon see which is the surer side. Surely the surest way to avoid damnation is to avoid sin. Now, where are souls so much in danger of sin as in the Roman society, where so little is given to internal life and piety, and so much to external pomp and service; and where errors are so palpable, that either men do not believe them with their hearts, or, if their hearts were upright and not perverse and obstinate, could not believe them? But just so is the way of Popery to true Christianity. Surely whatever it be to papists, it would be absolutely damnable to us, as wilfully to thrust ourselves upon apparent ruin. There is a cavil or pretence which I shall speak unto on this occasion: that many Protestants confess papists may be saved in their faith; whereas they hold Protestants and other heretics may not be saved out of

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the catholic church; and therefore it is safe to enter into that way which is safe by the consent of both parts.

*Ans.* (1.) Men's opinions are no ground of faith. Persons may be in a sad, woeful case, that men speak well of: Luke 6:26, 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!' It is not what man saith, but what the word of God saith. Now the word speaketh terrible things to them: *Them that perish*, and *that they all might be damned who believed not the truth*, &c. (2.) The word of God teacheth us to judge of the way, rather than persons, who stand or fall to their own master. The way is damnable. If, on the one side, there be charity to some persons that sin of invincible ignorance, and are 'saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. 3:13, which the other side will not grant to a contrary persuasion; it argueth charity on one side, which hopeth all things; malice on the other, who rashly condemn men without evidence, yea, against it. (3.) If this argument would hold good, it had been better, in Christ and the apostles' time, to be a Jewish proselyte than a Christian. Christ acknowledgeth 'salvation is of the Jews,'—their promises of adoption and glory; but the Jews pronounced him and his followers accursed—scourged, imprisoned them; yet did not get so far as papists, to murder and butcher them. Suppose a little time that Catholics owned Donatists as brethren, allowed their baptism; but Donatists are re-baptised, and upon pain of damnation require all so to be, and say, Save thy soul, become a Christian. Now a pagan should rather by this argument join himself to Donatists than Catholics. Lastly, the argument may be retorted—A Protestant keepeth himself to his Bible, baptismal covenant, creed, but denieth many things which papists believe and practise, as papal infallibility, transubstantiation, purgatory, invocation of saints, worshipping of images. They cannot but say Protestants are in the right.

*Use 2.* Observe the degrees of hardening, not receiving the truth in the love of it, believing a lie, discarding truth, and then taking pleasure in unrighteousness, and then cometh damnation.

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