



The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians

The Apostle's Concern for the Thessalonian Church

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

- I. THE CAUSE OF CONCERN (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)
 - A. The Expression of the Concern (2 Thessalonians 2:1)
 1. The manner of expression—"we beseech you"
 2. The recipients of the expression—"brethren"
 3. The authority of the expression
 - a. By the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; obviously this is not a reference to the second advent, because it involves OUR gathering together unto Him
 - b. By our gathering together unto Him
 - B. The Source Bringing Concern (2 Thessalonians 2:2)
 1. The effect brought
 - a. Shaken
 - (1) The swiftness of the shaking—soon
 - (2) The place of the shaking—in mind
 - b. Troubled
 2. The source bringing the troubling
 - a. Spirit; not the Holy Ghost
 - b. Word
 - c. Letter, as from the apostles
 - (1) It became necessary for Paul to make an appeal to these saints because of a counterfeit letter—one supposedly from him that completely bewildered and confused the Thessalonians.
 - (2) The imposter(s) had written to these believers claiming they were missing the events in heaven.
 - (3) These saints must have inquired concerning a forged letter that had contradicted what Paul had personally taught them.
 - (4) Some have thought that the false letter writer(s) reference those mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 who did not rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).
 3. The subject of concern
 - a. The day of Christ
 - (1) "The day of Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:2) must be accurately distinguished from "the day of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 5:2).
 - (2) **THEY ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS!**
 - (3) "The day of the Lord" is approximately, if not exactly, a 1,000-year period of time. The day of the Lord begins just prior to the



Lord's second advent and the accompanying wrath and continues through the kingdom concluding with the passing away of the heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:10).

- (4) "The day of Christ," on the other hand, commences at the rapture and includes events that take place in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:13; Philippians 1:6, 10; Philippians 2:16) simultaneous to Daniel's seventieth week upon the earth. In fact, here are ten truths about the day of Christ to consider.
 - a) God's working within the life of the Christian will continue until that day (Philippians 1:6).
 - b) Paul's prayer for the believers was that they would remain faithful until that day (Philippians 1:10).
 - c) Paul desired to rejoice in that day that he had not run or laboured in vain (Philippians 2:16).
 - d) Christians are to presently live in such a way as to be blameless in that day (1 Corinthians 1:7).
 - e) In that day, Christians stand before Christ's judgment seat (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
 - f) Paul tells of a man whose flesh was turned over to Satan but his spirit was saved in that day (1 Corinthians 5:5).
 - g) In that day, we will rejoice over those believers whom we have affected (2 Corinthians 1:14).
 - h) Paul knew his commitment to the Lord would manifest itself in that day (2 Timothy 1:12).
 - i) Paul prayed his fellowservant would find mercy in that day (2 Timothy 1:18).
 - j) There is a special crown at that day for those who love the Lord's appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).
- (5) One can readily ascertain why these believers would be troubled if they suspected the day of Christ was "at hand" in heaven.
 - a) This would mean they had missed the blessed hope.
 - b) With this in mind, the apostle Paul sought to comfort the believers stressing that the day of Christ and its associated events were not presently taking place.

b. At hand

II. THE EASE OF THE CONCERN (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)

A. The Day of Christ and Revelation of the Man of Sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

1. The day of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
 - a. The threat of deception
 - (1) Let no man deceive you
 - (2) By ANY means (see 2 Thessalonians 2:2)
 - b. The precursor of the event
 - (1) The declaration of a precursor—before "that day" (the day of Christ), the Bible says there must FIRST be a falling away.



- (2) The clarification of the precursor
 - a) Options
 - i) A captivity (Jeremiah 37:13)
 - ii) A rejection of a false profession (Hebrews 6:6)
 - iii) Apostasy
 - b) The point to apostasy
 - i) A proper understanding of the conditions found in the early church assists in comprehending the precondition to the commencement of the day of Christ.
 - (a) At the time of Paul's writing to the Thessalonians (AD 51-52), Christianity was young and zealous.
 - (b) At best, these saints had only been exposed to the truths found in Paul's epistles for a few years.
 - (c) These babes in Christ were gaining doctrinal understanding at a rapid pace, but what they lacked in knowledge they possessed in zeal.
 - ii) Paul's reference was likely to a falling away that would begin after the apostles died but one being experienced today on a grand scale.
 - (a) During the first century, thousands of converts were coming to Christ (at times during a single gathering—see Acts 2:41; Acts 4:4).
 - (b) Obviously, these believers uniquely understood that the apostasy was future.
 - iii) The “falling away” equates to the prophecy of the last days’ “perilous times” (2 Timothy 3:1) as evil men will “wax worse and worse” (2 Timothy 3:13).
 - (a) Paul wrote of this “latter times” apostasy calling it a “depart[ing] from the faith” (1 Timothy 4:1).
 - (b) This departure from “sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3) is a distinguishing feature of our last days.
 - (c) This differs considerably from the last days for the Jews which are marked by physical disturbances (famines, earthquakes, etc.) (Matthew 24:7).
 - (d) The church's last days are highlighted with spiritual disturbances (covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, unthankful, etc.) (2 Timothy 3:1-5).
- (3) The singularity of the precursor
 - a) The **ONLY** stipulation preventing the clock from starting on the day of Christ is this falling away.
 - b) The Bible does not say, as some mistakenly teach, that the man of sin must be revealed **FIRST**.
 - i) 2 Thessalonians 2:3 continues chronologically and incorporates a gap of time at the comma after first.
 - (a) God provides further proof of how to correctly interpret the grammatical pattern found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.



- (b) The grammatical pattern of “and” followed by a comma reveals a chronological event that does not necessarily take place simultaneously.
 - (c) Consider other examples of “, and” that reveals the same scenario (Revelation 17:8, 11).
 - (i) The beast which ascends from the bottomless pit in Revelation 11:7 does not immediately descend into perdition.
 - (ii) There is a gap of time in Revelation chapter 17 similar to the one found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.
 - (d) This is similar to the gap of time found a few verses later at the comma in verse 8 after the word revealed.
 - (e) Neither verse 3 nor verse 8 reveals events that happen simultaneously.
 - 2. The revelation of the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
 - a. The schedule of the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
 - (1) The day of Christ is preceded by a falling away.
 - (2) The rapture of the church introduces the day of Christ in heaven and the man of sin and Daniel’s seventieth week on earth.
 - a) This man will make a covenant with the Jews in the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week only to betray them midway through this period, revealing his true nature.
 - b) At the midpoint of Daniel’s seventieth week, the man of sin will be revealed for who he is.
 - b. The person and work of the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
 - (1) The person—“the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
 - a) Jesus Himself identified a son of perdition (John 17:12) as one whom Satan entered into (Luke 22:3).
 - b) Prior to the man of sin’s revelation, he will appear to be a man of peace and will “obtain the kingdom by flatteries” (Daniel 11:21).
 - (2) The work (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
 - a) He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.
 - b) He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
- B. The Previous Expression of the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:5-6)
 - 1. The time of the expression (2 Thessalonians 2:5)
 - a. When I was yet with you
 - b. I TOLD you these things
 - c. Note: Paul admonished the Thessalonians to reflect not upon his first epistle, but upon personal discussions that took place while he was with them.



- (1) This being said, we should not try to force the context of the current discussion back into First Thessalonians.
 - (2) Those saints initially receiving this epistle would know better.
 - (3) By recalling Paul's conversations, they would know what would withhold the man of sin's revelation.
 - (4) Knowing Paul's background would lead any reader today to recognize that Paul would have used the Old Testament canon to reveal the what and who.
2. The reminder of the expression (2 Thessalonians 2:5-6)
 - a. Remember ye not (2 Thessalonians 2:5)
 - b. And now ye know (2 Thessalonians 2:6)
 3. The content of the expression (2 Thessalonians 2:6)
 - a. The timing involved
 - (1) Though the Lord dwells outside of time (Isaiah 57:15), He assigns to everything its time and season upon the earth (Ecclesiastes 3:1).
 - (2) Just as the Lord Jesus Christ came "when the fulness of time was come" (Galatians 4:4), and there will come a time when "the fulness of the Gentiles" will "come in" (Romans 11:25, 12), the "man of sin" will "be revealed" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) "in his time" (2 Thessalonians 2:6).
 - b. Some foundational statements
 - (1) Some person, event, or thing withholdeth the revelation of the man of sin.
 - (2) Perhaps the most common teaching among those who subscribe to the pre-tribulational rapture is that the "what" withholding is the removal of the Spirit of God from the earth.
 - a) The Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9) indwells church age saints and will be removed from that capacity at the rapture.
 - b) And while this fact holds true, this teaching comes with its own share of challenges:
 - i) The removal of that which is withholding occurs in the middle of Daniel's Seventieth Week which then allows the revelation of the man of sin,
 - ii) The assumption that the Spirit of Christ will not indwell tribulation saints,
 - iii) And zero scriptural evidence of the Spirit of God withholding the fulfillment of prophecy.
 - c. Offering an alternative
 - (1) Prior to ascertaining the meaning and context of the passage, one must gain a better understanding of the word *withholdeth*.
 - a) Historically, the word meant to keep back or refuse to allow.
 - b) The same appears to be true in scripture (Genesis 20:6; Genesis 22:12; Job 12:15).
 - c) Apart from the -eth ending, the compound word is made up of the prefix with meaning "back or away" and the root word *hold* which is self-explanatory.



- (2) According to a literal understanding of the passage, some being or thing is going to keep or hold back the revelation of the man of sin on this earth until an appointed time.
- (3) Both the books of Daniel and Revelation indicate that Michael the archangel dutifully withholds when warring against the Devil (Daniel 10:21; Revelation 12:7-9).
- (4) The prophecy is clear and unambiguous.
 - a) Halfway through Daniel's seventieth week, Michael wars against the Devil and the Devil is cast down to the earth.
 - b) At that point, the Bible warns, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth" (Revelation 12:12).
 - c) The Devil on earth will no longer be withheld or restrained and all hell will break loose upon the earth, particularly as it relates to Israel.

C. The Mystery of Iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:7-9)

1. The present work (2 Thessalonians 2:7a)
 - a. The mystery of iniquity doth already work (see 1 John 2:18).
 - b. One is presently letting.
2. The continued letting
 - a. The one letting will continue to do so.
 - b. As such, there are appointed bounds and times for the work of antichrists and the Antichrist.
 - c. The way antichrists work NOW will not be the same manner in which the Antichrist will work at the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week.
 - (1) When the week ensues, the man of sin will launch his campaign with a platform of peace.
 - (2) By the end of the prophetic week, the man of sin's ability to convince the masses will be so that people will boldly proclaim, "Peace and safety" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).
 - (3) One might wonder how Satan could undertake such a massive operation without being exposed for his true identity.
 - a) However, the Bible indicates that Satan will deceive the masses with signs and lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9) elsewhere called great wonders (Revelation 13:13).
 - b) Just as the apostles went forth with signs to confirm their words, the beast will have power to perform signs in hopes of confirming Satan's message.
3. The future allowance (2 Thessalonians 2:7b-9)
 - a. Some foundational truths (2 Thessalonians 2:7b)
 - (1) Before one can fully grasp the man of sin's revelation, a better understanding of the word *let* must be ascertained.
 - (2) The immediate context of 2 Thessalonians 2:7 suggests a meaning somewhat contrary to common usage.



- (3) Contextually, whatever or whoever letteth does so until taken out of the way.
 - (4) As such, it would appear the word *let* is equal to being in the way or withholding (2 Thessalonians 2:6).
 - (5) Offering another witness, Paul told those in Rome he had purposed to come unto them, but was *let* hitherto (Romans 1:13) only to later clarify that he had been much hindered from coming (Romans 15:22).
- b. Who is “taken out of the way”? (2 Thessalonians 2:7b)
- (1) Most Bible teachers would agree that the man of sin is not revealed until the midpoint of Daniel’s seventieth week.
 - (2) What is not, however, as commonly agreed upon is the identity of the one “taken out of the way.”
 - (3) By comparing scripture with scripture, it appears that the identity of the one letting or withholding is Michael (Revelation 12:7-9), THE archangel, and not as commonly taught, the church (or indwelt believers who depart this earth 3½ years prior to the man of sin’s revelation).
 - (4) Michael, as Israel’s prince, is Israel’s protector (Daniel 12:1). However, midway through the prophetic week, Michael will be taken out of the way allowing Satan to work unrestrained on the earth.
 - (5) With the Devil’s scope pinpointed upon earth’s inhabitants and his time short, he will demonstrate great wrath against those upon the earth.
 - a) Up until this time, Satan’s focus day and night entailed standing before God’s throne accusing the brethren (Revelation 12:10).
 - b) While he focused upon this objective, Israel remained safe.
 - c) When the war in heaven ensues and Satan is cast into the earth, the real unbridled trouble begins.
 - d) At this time, the abomination of desolation takes place, the beast appears, and the Jews must and do flee for safety (Revelation 12:12; Daniel 12:1; Revelation 13:4).
 - (6) Jeremiah also pinpoints this time and identifies the it as Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7).
 - a) Jeremiah says Jacob (Israel) will be saved out of this time while Daniel 12:1 testifies “thy people shall be delivered.”
 - b) This truth can be confirmed by comparing those “saved” in Acts 2:21 with those “delivered” in Joel 2:32.
 - c) This time of trouble will start at the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15) when many will “flee into the mountains” for deliverance and protection (Matthew 24:16) from the “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21).
- c. Understanding the chronology
- (1) The chapter is laid out chronologically, but not necessarily uninterrupted.



- (2) The passage begins just prior to Daniel's seventieth week and spans the entire seven-year period.
 - (3) Below is the basic overview of the chronology. Take note of two key transitional verses (verses 3 and 8) each spanning 3½ years.
 - a) Verse 3—Falling away first (precedes 70th Week) to man of sin revealed (Midpoint)
 - b) Verse 4—Man of sin sits in temple of God (Midpoint)
 - c) Verse 6—Revealed in his time (Midpoint)
 - d) Verse 7—Withholder taken out of the way (Midpoint)
 - e) Verse 8—Wicked revealed (Midpoint) to destroy with brightness of Christ's coming (End of Daniel's 70th Week)
- d. The revelation of the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:8a)
- (1) The context of the first half of Second Thessalonians deals with the REVELATION of the man of sin/son of perdition/ mystery of iniquity/that Wicked.
 - (2) Just like the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, this passage in Thessalonians is the revelation of Satan. Paul uses the same word to make his point on three separate occasions.
 - a) Verse 3 mentions that "the man of sin, the son of perdition will be revealed"
 - b) Verse 6 mentions that "he might be revealed in HIS TIME"
 - c) Verse 8: "and then shall that Wicked be revealed"
 - (3) The timing of this revelation unveils the pre-wrath/post-tribulation dilemma.
 - a) Each mention of the revelation must be considered in unison in order to understand the timing.
 - b) The problem with stating that the man of sin will be revealed prior the church's rapture misses the gap after the FIRST event of verse 3.
 - c) Verse 8 provides a similar gap, where that Wicked will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume at His coming 3½ years after this revelation takes place.
 - d) The comma in this phrase spans this 3½ year period.
- e. The destruction of the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:8b-9)
- (1) The destroyer (2 Thessalonians 2:8b)
 - a) The person—"the Lord"
 - b) The practice
 - i) With the spirit of His mouth
 - ii) With the brightness of His coming
 - (2) The destroyed (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
 - a) Him, whose coming is after the working of Satan
 - b) Him, whose coming is with:
 - i) All power
 - ii) Signs
 - iii) Lying wonders