

2 THESSALONIANS 2

Are You Ready?

For review:

This is Paul's 2nd letter to the Thessalonian church.

This letter is in response to the challenges and persecution that they are receiving and for more clarification from his 1st letter.

Paul has thanked the Lord for them and encouraged them as a loving father to his children.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This church may be 3 months to a year old. New believers in Christ.

They have been persecuted for their faith and as we read chapter 2, they have received some conflicting teaching contrary to doctrine they have learned from Paul.

In the next 12 verses, Paul will help clarify some confusion about The Day of the Lord, The Tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

A teaching has been brought to the church in Thessalonica.

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A teaching telling them that they have missed the Rapture and that they are now in the Tribulation, **the Day** of the Lord. Paul will assure them that they are NOT in the Tribulation.

Paul writes this letter because he is concerned for the church.
Someone has instructed them in something contrary to Paul's teaching.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

Something has rattled their cage so to speak.
Someone has given them a "thus says the Lord" spoken to them as if from Paul or they have received a letter and they have put Paul's name on it.

This is the very reason that we encourage you to spend time in God's word.
The more time you spend with Jesus, the easier it will be to discern whether a word or a teaching is from the Lord or not.

God's word must be our filter for everything!

Paul will now explain to them WHY they are not in the Tribulation.

Paul reminds them as he identifies 2 things:

1. **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**
2. **our gathering together to Him**

Paul has addressed these 2 topics in his 1st letter, **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**.

Jesus is coming **for** His church and then coming **with** His church.
Jesus comes **for** His church at the Rapture.
Jesus comes **with** His church at the end of the Tribulation. **That Day**
(Remember, **that Day** is a reference to a period of time, not a specific day)

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

We are not to be deceived.
That Day will not come unless

There are 3 signs that Paul tells us about the Tribulation.

2 of them are here in vs 3:

1. **the falling away comes first**
2. **the man of sin is revealed**

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1. *the falling away comes first*

- **Falling away**, what does this mean?
Well, we need to look at the Greek word used here.
Apostasia- (ä-pos-stä-se'-ä) meaning falling away, defection.
Where we get the word, apostasy. (root word *apostasion*-divorcement)

Our English definition- An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one's faith or religion.

So **the falling away**, a defection, and abandonment could be someone or group of people that were believers at one time have left the faith.

The statement in the Greek is "**the falling away**" not "a falling away".
This will be more of a great and final departure of the faith.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times *some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

Is this happening today? Yes, it is! (*numerous pastors and worship leaders*)
Has this happened in the past? Yes, it has!

2 Timothy 3:1-5

But know this, that in *the last days, perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

Are these things happening today? Yes, they are!
Has this happened in the past? Yes, it has!
(*people creating a belief instead of following Christ*)

Now we could stop right here and ask the question, Are we in the Tribulation?

But hold on please. We have 3 things to consider and this is just the 1st.
Hopefully you understand why some people can think that the Tribulation is happening now.

Apostasia is only translated 1 other time in the NT.

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Acts 21:21 translated *forsake*.

Both times implying something negative.

The falling away (people leaving the faith) happens 1st
(this is currently happening) Are you ready?

2. ***the man of sin is revealed***

First, let's look at how this ***man of sin*** is described in vs 4.

the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

- ***son of perdition***

Perdition means to destroy with utter destruction, perishing or in ruin, complete loss of well-being. Really the opposite of salvation. This person will be a character marked by destruction.

- ***opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped***

There are people in our past that have done this:

- Caesar
- Stalin
- Hitler
- Charles Manson
- Mao Zedong
- Jim Jones
- David Koresh

There are just too many to mention.

- ***he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God***

This event has been revealed to us in ***Daniel 9:27, 11:31*** and ***12:11***.

The antichrist will set himself up in the Temple in Jerusalem and demand the world worship him as God.

Jesus even talked about this event.

Matthew 24:15

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)

Remember, we looked at the characteristics of ***the son of perdition***. The thing that happens is that ***he is revealed***. Has this person been revealed? No

So we see how people can get confused about a few aspects of the timing of the Tribulation.

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We have looked at 2 of the 3 signs of the Tribulation:

1. ***the falling away comes first***
2. ***the man of sin is revealed***

Let's look at the 3rd, ***the restraining***.

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8

And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

This can be a bit confusing, what is going on?

If something being restrained, there must be someone doing the restraining, right?

So who is being restrained and who is doing the restraining?

Right now, Satan and the man of sin (son of perdition) is being restrained.

They are currently at work but restrained.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; this is Satan.

There is evil in our world today.

We do not have a clear reference to the who or what is doing the restraining.

We know that Satan is against everything of God.

He is behind ***the mystery of lawlessness is already at work***

A sensible conclusion to the who or the what holding back ***lawlessness*** could be none other than God, in the work of the Holy Spirit.

If Holy Spirit is doing the restraining, Satan currently, is **not** allowed to have complete reign here on this earth. Yet.

At the appointed time, the Holy Spirit, ***He who restrains***, restrains the full revealing of Satan.

The Holy Spirit (in some way) will be taken out of the way and this ***son of perdition will be revealed***.

We have identified who is doing the restraining, the Holy Spirit.

And what is being restrained, Satan.

So what will be removed or will be ***taken out of the way***.

An amazing thing happened in ***Acts 1-2***, the birth of the church.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was received.

The Holy Spirit that has been with man and upon man since time began can now live IN man. But something was promised in the New Covenant. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Turn to the Book of Acts.

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Acts 1:5 Jesus speaking

"for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Acts 1:8

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Act 2:1

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:16-17 Peter teaching

**"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.**

Act 2:21

And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'

Acts 2:22-24

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Act 2:28

**You have made known to me the ways of life;
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'**(Psalm 16)

Act 2:33

"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

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Act 2:37-38

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Act 2:41-42

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about 3000 souls were added to them.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The church of Jesus Christ.

The church is anyone who receives Christ as their Lord and Savior.

We are the church. Ekklēsia-called out ones, an assembly.

Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18**

on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

As long as the church is on this earth, Satan will not triumph.

The obvious conclusion to what is removed? The church has to be removed.

This is described for us by the Rapture.

The church is removed before the Tribulation can begin.

3 signs for the Tribulation:

1. **the falling away comes first**
2. **the man of sin is revealed**
3. **the restraining is removed**

Are we close to the end times? I believe we are! Are you ready?

Paul now gives us more clarity about **the lawless one**.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The **lawless one** is the antichrist and **will be revealed**.

It is the work of Satan himself.

This antichrist is NOT Satan, but a man being used by Satan willingly.

Paul tells us 2 certainties of this **lawless one**:

1. he will **be revealed** when the Holy Spirit removes His restraint
2. he will **be destroyed** by the brightness of Jesus at His 2nd coming.

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2 Thessalonians 2:9

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

It is almost as if this **lawless one** is trying to imitate Jesus. Antichrist?

Revelation 13:13

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Satan can perform miracles.

Spiritual power does not necessarily mean the power is from God.

He is a deceiver and a liar! He takes things and makes them appear as if they are from God.

Satan creates nothing.

He is not God. He is antichrist.

How do we know who or what is antichrist?

1 John 2:18

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

1 John 2:22

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:3

and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

2 John 1:7

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

There should be no confusion here.

Anyone that says that Jesus is not the Son of God is antichrist.

Anyone that says Jesus the Son of God did not come in the flesh is antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:10

And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

This deception can only happen to those who do not receive **the love of the truth**. It is a scary thing to see even now, people that reject Christ and are **believing the lie**.

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This gives us a real understanding of what being saved means. Are you saved?

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

God never forces anyone to do anything.

People during the Tribulation who because they did not receive the gift of salvation, they will be given a ***strong delusion***.

People would rather have ***pleasure in unrighteousness*** than to ***believe the truth***.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul again is reminding the Thessalonians that he is ***bound to give thanks to God*** for them.

How awesome would it be to have someone tell you that they are bound to God to be thankful for you. Is there someone that you should be thankful for?

Paul is thankful and he reminds them that they are loved by the Lord. Why? Their faith in Jesus!

Aside from the challenges of persecution and confusion on teaching. They find the truth, and believe it.

Paul also tells them that they are chosen, why? He tells them ***because God from the beginning chose you***

John 15:16

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My Name He may give you.

God chooses ***them for salvation through sanctification***

Sanctification is consecration or purification.

Sanctification can only happen when we experience drama in life.

We learn, we grow, we mature and get stronger.

And we do this ***by the Spirit and belief in the truth***

We need the Holy Spirit desperately in our lives.

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Act 1:8

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The Holy Spirit empowers us to do the will of God.

We need to **believe in the truth** of the Gospel.

The truth is Jesus!

Remember the man who brought his son to Jesus to be healed?

Mark 9:23-24

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

We want to believe yet sometimes we struggle.

Jesus will stand the test of time. The Good News of Jesus Christ is what the world needs.

The Gospel that Paul taught them was the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:15-17

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

We stand firm in knowing the Word of God.

the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

The Bible recognizes that traditions can be dangerous.

Some things may start off with good intentions yet lead to a ritual habit that becomes more about what you do than why you do it.

Matthew 15:2-3 handwashing before honoring their parents

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Paul has in mind the apostolic traditions given to us in the New Testament.

Paul reminds the people of all that God has done for them.

- **who has loved us**
- **given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace**

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Paul asks the Lord to **comfort** their **hearts and establish** them **in every good word and work.**

For us, we need to be comforted by these words. Not confused or frustrated.
We need to be established by God's word in all that we say and all that we do.

3 signs for the Tribulation:

1. **the falling away comes first** happening now
2. **the man of sin is revealed**
3. **the restraining is removed**

Are we close to the end times? I believe we are! Are you ready?
Are you ready for the return of Christ?