

1/2/00

**The Certainty of The Anti-Christ!**

**2Thess. 2:4-8**

Paul attempted to comfort the Thessalonians regarding the false teaching about the Day of The Lord, in the opening three verses, by:

- I. Reminding them of what they knew. vs. 1
- II. Reproving them for what they had believed. vs. 2
- III. Re-instructing them on what they had forgotten. vs. 3

Having done that, Paul continues to show them the folly of their believing that the “Day of The Lord” had come, by focusing on the man of sin or lawlessness, the son of perdition. vs. 4-8

Paul gives us three vital facts about the man of lawlessness who will be the principle character during the period known as the “Day of The Lord”.

- I. Paul describes the character of the man of lawlessness. vs. 4-5
- II. Paul declares the restraint hindering the appearance of the man of lawlessness. vs. 6-7
- III. Paul discloses the devastation regarding the man of lawlessness. vs. 8

**I. Paul describes the character of the man of lawlessness. vs. 4-5**

A. His attitude is marked by rebellion. vs. 4a

1. He will decide to oppose God.

\* “Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God.”

a. The personal pronoun “who”, refers back to the title of “The man of sin or lawlessness” in verse three depicting his character of rebellion and opposition to God.

\* Paul in this verse now, qualifies his lawlessness.

b. The word opposes “antikimai” means to be opposite, be adverse, or withstand.

1) The man will be the epitome of all that is contrary to God!

2) The word is used of the Spirit and the flesh being contrary to one another. Gal. 5:17

2. He will desire to be above God.

\* “Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is worshipped.”

a. The source is pride.

1) The word exalt “huperairomai” means to lift up over some thing, be haughty, or insolent towards one.

- 2) The word appears three times in the New Testament.
  - 3) The other two times are used by Paul to describe the purpose of his thorn in the flesh, so that he not be “exalted above measure”. 2Cor. 12:7
- b.** The purpose is power.
- 1) The word worshipped “sabasma” means whatever is religiously honored, an object of worship.
  - 2) The word is used by Paul as he addressed the Athenians regarding their altars, temples and statues etc. Acts 17:23
  - 3) The central idea is that of adoration and dedication.
  - 4) The man of sin and lawlessness defies “all”, be it true or false.  
\* Both verbs are in the present participle, a continuous attitude.
- B.** His actions are marked by self enthronement in the temple of God. vs. 4b  
\* “So that he sits as God”.
1. His actions are only the product of the process of his attitudes!
  2. He presumes on his authority, “he sits”.
    - a. The position of sitting is symbolic of rest and ruling control but it is temporary.

- b. This was Satan’s threat to God, “For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heave, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High”. Is. 14:13-14, Ezk. 28:11-19
2. He presumes on his person “as God”.
    - a. Denying his own human mortality. Ezk. 28:2, Dan. 7:25, 11:36
    - b. Deifying himself before the world.
  3. He pollutes the place of worship “in the temple of God”.
    - a. Defiling the inner sanctuary of the Holy place and most Holy, the word is, “naos”.
    - b. Declaring clearly in this verse that the temple has to be rebuilt. (next point)
  4. He is the fulfillment of the prophesy of Daniel, quoted by Jesus as a key sign. Matt . 24:15, Dan. 12:11
    - a. Antiochus Epiphanes is a type of the Antichrist, the lawless man, son of perdition, the beast, all are the same person. Dan 8:11, 11:31
    - b. In 168 B. C. he set up an altar to Zeus and slaughtered a pig on it an forcing the priest to eat it, inciting the Maccabean revolt.

- c. Antiochus did not fulfill the prophesy in its ultimate prediction for Jesus placed it in the future.  
\* Many prophecies have a two-fold fulfillment, if not more in types!
- d. Gaius Caligula didn't either in 40 A. D. as he attempted to set up a statue but he died.
- e. Titus the Roman general who destroyed the temple in 70 A. D. also didn't fulfill it, otherwise Jesus had to have returned in 1290 days after to set up His kingdom as He told Daniel.  
12:11

C. His appeal is marked by subtle deception.  
vs. 4c

\* "Showing himself that he is God".

1. By his policy of peace. Dan. 9:27
  - a. He will make a covenant with Israel for seven years, the final 70th week of Daniel's prophesy.
    - 1) Jesus told the Jews, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." Jn. 5:43
    - 2) The first sixty-nine weeks have been fulfilled, 483 years or 173,880 days.

- 3) The first 3 1/2 years he will officiate the first aspect of the prefix "anti", instead of Messiah or in place of.
- b. He will help rebuild the temple as part of the covenant.  
\* We already saw that he in fact will sit in the temple.
  - 1) The only problem is the Dome of The Rock on the Temple Mound, the second holy place to Mecca.
  - 2) But the Bible tells us that they may both be standing side by side.
  - 3) Ezekiel tells us that there is a wall all around the temple, to separate the holy from the profane. Ezk. 42:20
  - 4) John tells us the outer court is given to the Gentiles for 42 months. Rev. 11:1-2
2. By his power over death and man.
  - a. He will survive a deadly head wound. Rev. 13:3, 14
  - b. He will overcome man through the supernatural powers of Satan. Rev. 13:2, 4, 15-18
  - c. He will slander God and slay the saints. Rev. 13:5-7
3. By his political preeminence.
  - a. He will rise to power by the ten nation confederacy, the ten toes of

Nebuchadnezzar's image. Rev. 17:12, 13:1, Dan. 7:24, 2:41

- b. He will rule over the ten nations. Rev. 17:13
- c. He will ravage the religious harlot. Rev. 17:16-17
- d. He is the "little horn" of Daniel. 7:8, 20

**D.** His affirmation is nothing new. vs. 5

- 1. Paul reproves the Thessalonians for their failure to remember what they knew.
- 2. Paul had told them these very things when he was still with them in the founding of the church.
- 3. Paul had told them of the rapture and the day of wrath in the first letter. 1Thess. 4:17, 5:1-9

### **Illustration**

Absalom was a man of evil character, who stole the people's hearts.

### **Application**

The similarities of the man of sin or lawlessness and those who reject God and Jesus as Savior are interesting.

- 1. All rebellion against God is marked by a spirit that is contrary to God and His Spirit. 1Sam. 15:22-23

- 2. All rejection of God as Creator and redeemer leads to self-exaltation and self-worship, if this identifies you, then you are sitting as a god in your body, that is to be the temple of God. 1Cor. 6:19
- 3. All who hold this philosophy fall into self-deception, telling themselves that they can live any way they want and escape death and judgment. Heb. 9:27

*Paul described the character of the man of lawlessness!*

## **II. Paul declares the restraint hindering the appearance of the man of lawlessness. vs. 6-7**

- A. The Thessalonians knew as well as Paul what was restraining. vs. 6a  
\* "And now you know what is restraining".
  - 1. The word "what" is in the neuter, Paul is talking about very common knowledge and familiar ground regarding who or what was restraining the appearance of the Antichrist.
  - 2. The word restraining "katecho" means to hold back, prevail or hold down.
- B. The Thessalonians knew as well as Paul that as long as the restrainer was present, it could not be "the time" of the man of sin or lawlessness. vs. 6b

\* “That he may be revealed in his own time.”

1. The personal pronoun “he” refers to the Antichrist to come.
2. The person of the Antichrist will be revealed in his own time.
  - a. The word for time “kairos” means occasion, proper time, or season.
  - b. Speaks of a very specific period.
    - 1) The same word is used of the demons at Gadara, “torment us before the time”. Matt. 8:29
    - 2) The word is used by Jesus about the time of His cross, “before My time”. Jn. 7:6
    - 3) The word is used by Paul for the “Day of The Lord”, the times “chronos” and seasons “kairos”. 1Thess. 5:1

C. The Thessalonians knew as well as Paul that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work in principle. vs. 7a

1. The “mystery of lawlessness” is an unusual term .
  - a. This expression is found in the Thanksgiving Psalm in the Dead Sea Scrolls identifying evil and rebellion against God.

- b. The word mystery “mysterion” comes from the word, “to shut the mouth”.
  - c. The word was used of secret religions and initiatory rites known only to members.
2. The term mystery in the New Testament is used of things hidden previously but now revealed.
    - a. It is used of the mystery of Israel's blindness until the fullness of the Gentiles. Rom. 11:25
    - b. It is used of the mystery of the resurrection and rapture. 1Cor. 15:51-52
    - c. It is used of the Gospel hidden from ages and generations but now revealed. Col. 1:26
    - d. The term is never used of something not understood or unknown, but equally this knowledge is not known by human intellect but revealed by God’s word and spiritual illumination.
  3. The mystery of lawlessness is more than evil of the world through the fall.
    - a. It is the spirit of the Antichrist in principle which is hostile to all that stands for God and Christ.
    - b. It is identified with the man of lawlessness and indicated to be at

work already. 1Jn. 2:18, 22, 4:3, 2Jn. 7

- c. The word work “erergeo” means to be efficient and effectively at work
  - 1) The word is used of the Holy Spirit in the believer. 1Thess. 2:13
  - 2) We get our word energy from it.

**D.** The Thessalonians knew as well as Paul that one day he who now is restraining the man of lawlessness from being revealed in his own season would be removed. vs. 7b

1. The restrainer was identified in the neuter gender in verse six, but now in the masculine gender “he”, appearing two times in this verse, who is he?
2. The restrainer has been identified in the following ways.
  - a. The Roman empire “neuter”, the emperor “:he”.
  - b. The Jewish state.
  - c. Paul.
  - d. The preaching of the gospel.
  - e. The Holy Spirit.
  - f. The Church who is the salt and light of the world through the Holy Spirit, holding back the full outpouring of the mystery of lawlessness in the person not just the principle.
3. The restrainer will be taken out of the way.

- a. The word way “mesos” denotes middle, among or in the midst.
  - \* The word is used by Jesus, “I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves”. Matt 10:16
- b. The restrainer will be taken out from the midst of society in which the mystery of lawlessness is already working in principle.
  - \* My Spirit will not always strive with man. Gen. 6:3

### **Illustration**

The law of gravity is restrained by the law of aerodynamics which holds back the full force of gravity from taking place!

### **Application**

The Thessalonians knew as well as Paul, certain and absolute facts about the man of lawlessness and the restrainer, do you understand them so that you are not deceived like them?

1. Remember both the person of lawlessness and the power of restraint cannot be present at the same time.
2. Remember each has their own season or time period.
3. Remember the mystery of lawlessness is active in the present time of the church, in principle but not in the person of antichrist, until his set time.

4. The removal of the restrainer, the church at the rapture, will give way to the revelation of the Antichrist.

*Paul declared the restraint hindering the appearance of the man of lawlessness!*

**III.** Paul discloses the devastation regarding the man of lawlessness. vs. 8

**A.** The devastation regarding the world. vs. 8a

\* “And then the lawless one will be revealed”.

1. Once the restrainer is removed the man of lawlessness will be revealed.
  - a. The word revealed “apokalupto” means to be unveiled.
    - 1) This is the third time the word appears in this form regarding his unveiling. 2:3, 6, 8
    - 2) The falling away of verse three, certainly will begin before his revelation and reach it’s climax at the departure and removal of the church. 1Tim. 4:1-4, 2Tim. 3:1-9, 13, 4:3-5
2. Once the restrainer is removed the “Day of The Lord” will begin.
  - a. False peace and safety followed by sudden destruction. 1Thess. 5:3

- b. God will turn the world over to believe the lie. 2Thess. 2:10-11
- c. The Antichrist will appear as a man of peace through diplomacy, but war, famine, pestilence and persecution will follow him. Rev. 6:1-11
  - \* It's called “The hour which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.” Rev. 3:10

**B.** The devastation regarding his person. vs. 8b

1. The Lord will consume him with the breath of His mouth.
  - a. The word consume “analisko” means to use up, destroy.
    - 1) The word is used of the disciple desiring to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans. Lk. 9:54
    - 2) The word is used of Christians consuming one another by their flesh. Gal. 5:15
  - b. The Lord is the One doing the consuming of his person.
    - \* It does not mean annihilation!
2. The Lord will destroy him with the brightness of His coming. “Is 10:4”
  - a. The word destroy “katargeo” means to make idle, inoperative or inactive.

- 1) He will no longer have his place and power as has been described.
- 2) He will no longer deceive anyone.
- b. The word brightness “epiphania” means manifestation in physical presence and glory “parousia”. 1:7-9
  - 1) God is called a man of war. Is. 42:13
  - 2) Jesus returns to fight the battle of Armageddon. Rev. 19:11-21
  - 3) Nebuchadnezzar image was struck with a stone not cut with hand at the feet and it crumbled. Dan. 2
    - \* He will say, “You were, I Am!”

### **Illustration**

Korah’s rebellion and devastation is a classic case for all who are self willed!

### **Application**

1. The Scriptures clearly tell us that the world is not going to get better, “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2Tim. 3:13

\* This is not being a pessimist but a realist!

2. Think about the evil that will take hold in the future times, if in our day evil is unchecked already?

\* Unless those days were shorten, no one would be saved, Jesus said. Mk. 13:20

3. Take a warning from the Antichrist, he will not escape his rebellion and live forever in his life of power and self-will, nor will you.

\* The Lake of Fire is the end for all rebels! Rev. 20:11-15

\* You only have a set number of years, use them wisely, serve God!

*Paul disclosed the devastation regarding the man of lawlessness!*

### **Conclusion**

Paul has reminded the Thessalonians about three important facts regarding the man of sin or lawlessness.

- I. Paul described his evil character!
- II. Paul declared that there is a restrainer hindering his appearance!
- III. Paul disclosed his devastation of the man of Lawlessness!