

Overwhelmed or Jesuswhelmed

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Chapter One - On-going harassment
Chapter Two - Day of the Lord

vs. 1, Now concerning the coming of Jesus and our being gathered to him:

Paul is using the imagery of exile.

vs. 2, Don't be upset by the false teaching which states that the Lord has already come.

Why are they upset and troubled?

Because troublemakers are sowing seeds of fear.

vs. 3, Don't let anyone deceive you in any way!

Deceit is a persistent and difficult weed to pull (our culture is obsessed with conspiracy).

The man of lawlessness -> he is anti-law and anti-God

Again, Paul is using familiar language used to describe notorious enemies of Israel / God.

Second Century BC, Antiochus IV Epiphanes
First Century BC, Pompey the Great

Lawless one is a descriptor and archetype of those who are anti-God figures.
Paul is using the images of the past to join to the future.

vs. 4, The day of the Lord

Will not come

- Unless the apostasy comes first.
- The man of lawlessness is revealed.
- He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship
- He sits in God's temple proclaiming that he himself is God.

This particular text has stirred all kinds of questions throughout the centuries.

- What is the "apostasy"?
- Who is the "man of lawlessness"?
- What is the "mystery of lawlessness"?
- Who or what is the "restrainer"?
- What temple?

Is Paul referring to the temple in Jerusalem which at the time is still standing, but will be destroyed in about 20 years (70 AD).

Or is Paul referring to the "new temple" the church?

We must not get lost in the trees and lose sight of the forest.

There is a much bigger picture that has direct application to our lives.

vs. 5-7, Remember, I have spoken to you about this.

- There is a great dividing line between the wicked and the righteous.
- There will be a great rebellion where the lawless one will try to dethrone God himself.
- I have already spoken to you about this.

Paul has not started “the end of the world” count down!
He is revealing, in large themes, the realities of the day of the Lord.

Exact specifics are not the point!

Many have speculated who or what could be the restrainer.

The majority thought from scholars is that the restrainer is the Archangel Michael.

- This restraint is taking place according to a divine time table.
- When the restraint is removed the opportunity for preaching and hearing the gospel will be brought to an end.
- The power of evil will be fully seen.
- This power is currently present, but isn’t “out in the open”. The evil we see and endure now is only a shadow of the fullness of evil which is being restrained.

Mystery - kept hidden, not a riddle to figure out.

Evil is real and it is at work, but it is restrained.

vs. 8, The Lord Jesus will destroy him.

Psalm 33:6 The heavens were made by the word of the Lord,
and all the stars, by the breath of his mouth.

Isaiah 30:33 Indeed! Topheth has been ready for the king for a long time. Its funeral pyre is deep and wide, with plenty of fire and wood. The breath of the Lord, like a torrent of burning sulfur, kindles it.

Isaiah 40:7 The grass withers, the flowers fade when the breath[a] of the Lord blows on them; indeed, the people are grass.

Isaiah 11:4 but he will judge the poor righteously and execute justice for the oppressed of the land. He will strike the land with a scepter from his mouth, and he will kill the wicked with a command from his lips.

Jesus appears -> The lawless one is destroyed.

- With his breath -> There is no battle. There is no question, “will Jesus win”?
- Jesus appears with glory and power and without effort destroys the lawless one.

vs. 9, The lawless one is based on Satan’s working.

There will be signs and wonders that serve the lie.

Those perishing will be completely deceived.

Matthew 24:24 For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Revelation 19:20 But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with it the false prophet, who had performed the signs in its presence. He deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image with these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

Paul truly desires to give the Thessalonians a broad understanding of the future.

Find comfort church.

You can be assured that the injustices and persecutions you are having to endure will be vindicated.

vs. 10, They perish because they did not accept the love of the **truth** and so be saved.

John 14:6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Who is Jesus?”

How does Jesus prevent deception in the life of a believer?

vs. 11, God sends them a strong delusion so that they will believe the lie.

Deception has an avalanche effect.

Falsehood begets falsehood.

You live under the delusion that you are correct, but the truth is that you are delighting in unrighteousness.

Romans 1: 24, 26, 28 Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. **26** For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. **28** And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right.

Psalm 81:12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own plans.

This may be the first time you are hearing this truth, but it is not new to the people of God.

God uses the sinful choices of humanity to accomplish his purposes.

There is a persistence which infects the human heart so deeply that deception is given free reign to build its own kingdom.

Sharp Contrast

vs. 13, You don't need to worry!

There is security and beauty in salvation!

You are loved by God. Steadfast, covenant keeping love.

From the beginning (first fruits). You are the first believers in Thessalonica.

Question: How will God move us as a community (Second Mile) into the joy, adventure, and beauty of experiencing first fruits?

Loneliness is a real and natural human response. Trust Jesus in the provision of daily bread.

1 Kings 19:10, 14 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life." **14** "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies," he replied, "but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they're looking for me to take my life."

By the Spirit (Through God's perspective) you can share in the glory of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

vs. 15, Stand firm

Despite a series of dark happenings to come ultimately Jesus will prevail and his loyal (faithful) people will be vindicated.

Stay the course!

Trust me, the traditions of the Apostles, and the teachings of Jesus.

vs. 16, Spontaneous prayer. Be encouraged!

You can be paralyzed by fear with what is yet to come

-or-

You can be filled with hope as you walk into the future and remain faithful in what God give us today as long as it is called today (daily bread). Not eating the bread of anxious toil.

Question: Do you find yourself overwhelmed with the circumstances of life? How do you adjust your perspective and enter into a space of being Jesuswhelmed?

What will prevent you from being deceived?

Have you fully embraced the love of the truth (Jesus)? Have you embraced forgiveness of your sin that can only come through Jesus?

Do you have confidence and trust in the power and justice of Jesus?
If not, why not? How are you receiving eternal encouragement and good hope by grace?

Are your hearts filled with a Jesus centered perspective. Does it fuel your words and actions?