

2 Thessalonians

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Introduction

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although know throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation, left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) 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.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he addresses the Day of the Lord and the antichrist, and then he addresses what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

- Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation
- Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ
- Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait for His Return

To recap the history of this church, Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).

Acts 17:1-9 (NKJV) ¹ Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas. ⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. ⁷ Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." ⁸ And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. ⁹ So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Paul was originally brought to this area of Macedonia by a vision given to him from the Lord. Macedonia is the area we call Greece today.

Acts 16:6-10 (NKJV) ⁶ Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷ After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not

permit them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

In Greece they first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica. Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. As the story is told to us in Acts 16 Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, and then miraculously freed from jail - only to be kicked out of the city. Then he came to Thessalonica and after three weeks of prosperous ministry, he had to flee from an angry mob. The charge against him was that he turned their world upside down (Acts 17:6). He then moved on to Berea - again enjoying several weeks of ministry, but soon was driven out by the same Thessalonians mob after they heard he was there. His next stop was Athens, where he preached a classic sermon but had mixed results. By the time he came to Corinth, he was in weakness, in fear and in much trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3). Paul was a very discouraged missionary!

(1 Corinthians 2:3 KJV) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

No doubt he was greatly concerned about the churches he had just founded - how were they doing? While at Corinth, Silas and Timothy came to him from Thessalonica with great news: the church there was going strong, and Paul got so excited that he dashed off this letter to the Thessalonians, probably his first letter to any church. He wrote it just a few months after he had first established the church in Thessalonica. After writing and sending this letter, Paul enjoyed a sustained and fruitful ministry in Corinth - and eventually returned to the Thessalonians.

Paul writes (1 Thessalonians) to them to encourage them, to commend them for their faith, to continue in their labor of love, and to remain hopeful of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Now it is a year later, and Paul is writing them again:

Chapter 1

Passage: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Title: Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation

We will be looking at 4 applications that come from times of persecution and tribulation in our lives. Four areas God wants us to recall in our minds when we are going through persecution.

Outline: Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation

1. The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)
2. The Proof in Persecution (1:5)
3. The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)
4. The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

Paul writes this church in Thessalonica to remind them of these things.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1. The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)

(2 Thessalonians 1:1 NKJV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy: Paul traveled with these men and together they contributed to this letter. Though the name Paul is listed first, both Silvanus and Timothy were his trusted companions.

(2 Thessalonians 1:2 NKJV) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Paul brought his customary greeting to the Thessalonian Christians, hailing them in the grace and peace of God the Father.

(2 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

V.3 - because your faith grows exceedingly – growth is always a sign of life and health. The sign of their life and health, this great growth.... Was their love for each other.

v.3 - and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, - I am reminded of when Aaron was going to die; he was going to be gathered unto his people. So, unless we're raptured

first, we will be gathered to our people. The question is, who are our people? Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples: By your love one to another" (John 13:35). John said we would know if we were truly born again by our love for the brethren (1 John 3:14). Therefore, if a person says he can't stand Christians, that he has no use for the church, he must take another look at his salvation because he won't be gathered into the company of believers when he dies.

Numbers 20:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: ²⁴ "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah.

John 13:34–35 (NKJV) ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

1 John 3:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

My heart for this church is that when the Lord comes back for His church, what He will find here is a unified church, and a purified church (holy and set apart for Him).

v.3 – because your faith grows exceedingly – faith grows through the Word of God. Are you having trouble loving, then I would say take the scalpel out of your hand and put it into God's. Open the Word, and say Lord in light of your word, do holy surgery on my heart as I read your word and give me, teach me, grow my love for others. And you read the Word, stop and ponder, ask the Lord to cut here, mend there, and watch how He gives you a heart of love for others, for that person you feel you can't love, and it won't be you doing the surgery, but the great physicians doing it in you through the scalpel of His Word.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Hebrews 4:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

(2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

So often I find myself praying for God to keep me from trials and persecution. But the fact is, I know that it is those very things that produce the Christ like qualities in me. I can look back over my walk with the Lord, and I can see the greatest periods of spiritual growth came during my trials and hardships. If you want to a gem for Jesus, a diamond for the kingdom, you will have to go through hard times. Do you know what a diamond is, it is a piece of worthless coal, that has been put under tremendous amount of pressure over numerous years under considerable heat.

If you want to shine brightly, sparkle for the Lord, there is no other way. That is just the way it is, our flesh will not allow it any other way.

Paul commends them again for their faith and love. Even through the hard times they were enduring, they grew in love and faith. They didn't let the trials of life quench the spirit, they continued to love one another. So too should that be our story church, that trials will not turn us against one another, but to one another, that we will comfort and encourage each other in and through the hard times.

But, something is missing here for the model church, you remember the outline for 1 Thessalonians, that is why it was important that we memorized it, it was in verse three:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

It's a year later, and Paul is commending them still for their faith and love, but notice, not their "hope". This church has lost the hope of the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the Rapture, of Him meeting them in the air. They quit living life backwards. The secret of life: Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. Unfortunately, the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused.

Faith will take care of your past, that your sins are forgiven, and you will spend eternity with Jesus. Hope takes care of your future that He is on the throne, and that at any moment he may come for me, that good is coming no matter how rotten things are at the present. Faith and Hope free me up to just love today. Faith and Hope allow me to love in the present. Hope puts me in the place that this world aint it!

This church lost their hope, and are troubled and confused for it. So true today for so many believers who reject, forget, or neglect that Jesus is coming back for His Bride.... Soon!

(2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

This is tribulation, not the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation is God's Wrath on a Christ rejecting world, but the church is not appointed to that wrath. This church thought they were going through the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture and were living in the 7 year period called the great Tribulation.

Remember the Reason for the Rapture

(1 Thessalonians 5:9 NKJV) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thessalonians 5:10 NKJV) who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

This wrath is meant for those who have rejected the Lord, this is the reason for the Rapture, to take His children out before he pours His wrath out. We experienced God's wrath on the cross, but Jesus took our place, that should have been me on that cross. The wrath I experience today is all from Satan who is the Prince of this world, as we live in a world that says I don't need you God to rule over me, I'm just fine without you. God's wrath will come against them in the seven year tribulation period.

Revelation 6:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Recall our study on the Rapture, If my house was infected with termites and I had to fumigate, even if my kids were being a bit rebellious or difficult, I would still make sure they were out of the house before the tent went up and the gas pumped it. Therefore if we earthly parents are concerned about our children's safety, how much more is our heavenly Father concerned about the safety of His children.

Before the Iraqi war, America called all their ambassadors out of Iraq.

(2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV) Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

They forgot what Paul told them in his last letter:

(1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV) Test all things; hold fast what is good.

They forgot, how often we forget, how often we don't hold fast, test all things, and then we are troubled and confused.

2. The Proof in Persecution (1:5)

(2 Thessalonians 1:5 NKJV) which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

The fact you are suffering is proof that you are part of the kingdom; whether it is people attacking you for your faith, or Satan working against you in the unseen realm of spiritual warfare, rejoice because it is proof that you are the Kings Kid.

(2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

The beauty of it is that it falls in the context of you know you are living in the last days:

2 Timothy 3:1-7 (NKJV) ¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

What did Paul tell them about the uncontrollable that happens in our life, as we travel on this earth, through this life, as we travel to heaven.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16 NKJV) Rejoice always,

(1 Thessalonians 5:17 NKJV) pray without ceasing,

(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

It doesn't say give thanks FOR everything give thanks, but IN everything. We don't give thanks for the loses, but in the loses we can give thanks because we know that God is still in control and He will still do great things through the loss. Gang we really do not know what is best for us. IF God gave me everything I asked for, and kept me from every trial I begged out of, my life would be a mess right now, I would totally be in the wrong place, with the wrong people, doing the wrong thing. It was and is the trials that make and have made me what I am. Therefore, after years of experiences this, I can apply what Paul said we are to do with the uncontrollable comes in our life.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16 NKJV) Rejoice always,

Again, I can never say this enough, know this Christian, God is always for you, no matter how bleak the situation is, even if it is your fault, He is still for you and desiring to make all things work together for good in your life.

(Romans 8:28 NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

God is on the throne, when I remember that, then everything comes into perspective, and I can fix my eyes on Him, not my circumstances.

We don't always know the rest of the story, we think the circumstances we are in are the end of all, nothing good will come out of it, but we don't see how God may be putting you in a place or position for something better to come along.

When people are persecuting you, rejoice, it means you are part of the kingdom. If no one can tell the difference, then you should be concerned.

(Matthew 5:10 KJV) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 KJV) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

(Matthew 5:12 KJV) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

(John 15:20 KJV) Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

(John 15:21 KJV) But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

Paul said he endured all things for the elect's sake for the sake of those who had elected or chosen to follow Jesus he wrote to Timothy that they may also obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory then he added it is a faithful saying for if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him if we suffer, that means endure, we shall also reign with him. Thus, whether Christians suffer physically or not the important thing is to endure, this means the believers are to stand their ground when others are fleeing, to hold out when others are giving in, to remain steadfast to the end regardless what others do.

2 Timothy 2:3 (NKJV) ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:10–12 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. ¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

Matthew 10:32–33 (NKJV) ³² "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

3. The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)

(2 Thessalonians 1:6 NKJV) since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

(2 Thessalonians 1:7 NKJV) and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

Notice, in verse 5 Paul refers to the enduring faith of these believers as “manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God...” What a heavy statement to make! Paul informs the Thessalonians, just a few months old in the Lord, that when Jesus returns at the Battle of Armageddon to crush Satan and annihilated the armies of mankind - God will point to them, and to all believers in all the ages, and say to a hostile world, “There! I did this to you, because of what you did to my children.” Nothing angers God more than how the world mistreats His kids. All persecution will be punished.

The evil world we live in thinks it can oppose Christ, and trash His Church, and there be no penalties... not so! At the moment, Jesus commands us “to turn the other cheek.” But in the end, He returns - not to turn His cheek, but He'll repay the world's tribulation on us with Great Tribulation on them.

But for our application as Christians today, don't repay evil for evil, for the Lord will take vengeance on those who do evil to you.

(Romans 12:19 NKJV) Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

And this is why the faith of the Thessalonians, and our faith, is so strategic. Our endurance in the face of persecution is “evidence of the righteous judgment of God.” Thus, we need to live “worthy of the kingdom...” For if we repay evil with evil, and show hatred to our persecutors - and don't respond to them with grace and love; then one day they'll say to God, “Why are you judging us, when Your people were no different?” Stoop to their level and we weaken God's argument.

When the Lord returns, all things will be set straight. Maybe that person, that boss, that loved one has wronged you greatly, there is coming a day when the Lord comes back in a flame of fire, and will take vengeance.

V7 - and to give you who are troubled rest with us – the present participle of this word for “troubled” indicates that the Thessalonians were even then in the midst of suffering. To those who were being oppressed the promise of rest must have been most welcome.

(2 Thessalonians 1:8 NKJV) in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV) These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Notice, how men are judged in the last days? It all boils down to the Gospel. What did they do with Jesus? Did they obey or reject the Gospel of Christ?

The word vengeance must not be confused with revenge. The purpose of vengeance is to satisfy God's holy law; the purpose of revenge is to satisfy a personal grudge. God does not hold a grudge against lost sinners. Quite the contrary, He sent His Son to die for them, and He pleads with them to return to Him. But if sinners prefer to "to know not God, and obey not the Gospel" (2 Thessalonians 1:8), there is nothing left for God to do but judge them.

God's standard is perfection, any imperfection can not have fellowship with Him. He is too pure to fellowship with impurity for He is the Holy God.

(Habakkuk 1:13 NKJV) You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

(Isaiah 59:1 NKJV) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

(Isaiah 59:2 NKJV) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

The last thing God wants to do is pour His wrath out upon this world, but He will have to do it in the end to purify the world. If God allowed the unbeliever and unrepentant into heaven, they would pollute and defile heaven, and heaven would no longer be heaven because impurity causes destruction.

Proof, look around you and watch how man is destroying man, and polluting this world. In fact if God did not cut these days short, we are told that man would eventually destroy each other.

(Matthew 24:22 KJV) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

When we remember that this is their destiny unless they repent, our heart should break for them, and we should reach out to them, that we might snatch them from the fire to come. This is why Jesus said pray for your enemies.

(Matthew 5:44 KJV) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

4. The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

(2 Thessalonians 1:10 NKJV) when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

v.10 – in that Day - Remember, today is "the day of man." For the most part, mankind is having his way and getting his say. But God is about to spoil the party. The day is coming when God will intervene in the affairs of men and have the final say! Daniel 9 speaks of a final seven year period that will end mankind's rule of planet earth. God will rain down His wrath on this wicked world, purify His people Israel, and usher in His Kingdom. And that period, yet future – starting at the rapture and culminating with the Kingdom - is "the day of the Lord."

Jesus is returning to be glorified where He was crucified. He'll rule where He was rejected. Even today, Jesus is mocked and ridiculed - and His followers are treated with the same disdain. But on Judgment Day Jesus will be admired by the world. Then, you and I, the Church, will be unveiled as His greatest work - His masterpiece. Irony of ironies, the world will glorify Jesus in us. How the tables will turn!

v.10 – to be admired among all those who believe - the emphasis is that Jesus will be glorified and honored among his Saints. As he returns in this revelation of flaming fire, He will be accompanied not only by the angels, but also by all the Saints, by all true believers, all whose righteousness is in Christ. All who believe will be filled with awe as they see his supernatural power and glory revealed in his glorious appearing and in the just judgment of his enemies

(2 Thessalonians 1:11 NKJV) 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,
(2 Thessalonians 1:12 NKJV) 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.

Notice verse 11, counted worthy of THIS calling. This statement comes in the context of persecution and tribulation. It is hard to grasp, but God says you have to be special to receive persecution.

When Peter and the apostles were beaten for their witness, they rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer shame for His name:

(Acts 5:41 KJV) And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Suffering, trials, persecution, and tribulations, all those lead to us bringing Him glory, and there will be a reward for that.

What a high calling we have been given... that Christ will one day be glorified in us for all the world to see! Let's begin to live in light of that calling today.

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In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Chapter 2

Passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

Title: Exposing the Anti-Christ

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 (NKJV) ¹ Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² 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. ³ 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, ⁴ 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. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ 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. 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. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 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. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Book Overview:

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although known throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) 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.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Unfortunately, the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; and this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV) ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

2 Thessalonians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

1 Peter 5:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV) ³ But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

And so here we have said in times pass what you believe about the last days how they unfold and all the details of him will not change your Salvation but it will change the way you live and we're seeing that with this church who we always studied in the first letter was the model church and now we see the model church is in great danger because they got confused on their doctrine of the last days.

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he addresses the Day of the Lord and the antichrist, and then he addresses what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

- Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation
- Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ
- Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait for His Return

Today's Passage Overview

Today we study what we as believers will miss, but a warning and unveiling for those of you who reject Jesus Christ today. Today we start our study of the unveiling of the Antichrist, and we will conclude it next week.

Outline of the Antichrist:

- 1.) The peacemaker**
- 2.) The peace-breaker**
- 3.) The persecutor**
- 4.) The prisoner**

But why spend time talking about someone, although great in power, when we will not be here to see him? Because verse 7 said the lawless one is already at work; there is a philosophy, an agenda, a working of the lawless one that (catch this) culminates with this final Antichrist we read about in our passage. A philosophy (a mindset), principals (belief), and practice (the philosophy and principal) put into action. So, what we see and learn of the final Antichrist, gives us understanding of the little (pre) antichrists that are working today. And as we do, we can start to make more sense of this world around us that is getting more and more perilous each day. As we have studied, we are not to be looking for the Antichrist but Jesus Christ; but our understanding of not who the Antichrist is, but his ways, are vital in our understanding of this world that seems to be growing darker and darker.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ 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.

1 John 2:18 (NKJV) 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.

Remember we said the why is there a rapture being the greater question of when is the rapture; well the same vein, not so much who is the Antichrist, but why is he "the" Antichrist.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, (2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) 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.

The church in Thessalonica thought they had missed the rapture, and that they were now living and enduring the Great Tribulation period. Paul writes to bring them an understanding of the End Times things. Remember what Paul said in the last letter to them about the End Times things: I do not want you to be ignorant. And the word to them and all of us.... Test all things and hold fast to what is good (1 Thess 5:21); the church of Thessalonica, did not take the whole counsel of God, they allowed themselves to be pigeonholed into a “hot topic”, and they focused on that and not the whole word of God which would have brought clarity. If there is one thing, I found that the great model church didn’t do, and that is they did not do what the Bereans did, and that is such the scriptures to find and prove out the whole counsel of God (Acts 17:11).

(1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Acts 17:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

This word hasn’t changed in that God still tells us to search the scripture and make sure we search the scriptures, in all things, (regarding our marriage, child rearing, giving, serving, loving, surrendering, everything).

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

Remember, today is “the day of man.” For the most part, mankind is having his way and getting his say. But God is about to spoil the party. The day is coming when God will intervene in the affairs of men and have the final say! Daniel 9 speaks of a final seven-year period that will end mankind’s rule of planet earth. God will rain down His wrath on this wicked world, purify His people Israel, and usher in His Kingdom. And that period, yet future – starting at the rapture and culminating with the Kingdom - is “the day of the Lord.”

Jesus is returning to be glorified where He was crucified. He’ll rule where He was rejected. Even today, Jesus is mocked and ridiculed - and His followers are treated with the same disdain. But on Judgment Day Jesus will be admired by the world. Then, you and I, the Church, will be unveiled as His greatest work - His masterpiece. Irony of ironies, the world will glorify Jesus in us. How the tables will turn!

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) 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.

Paul says before the antichrist is reveal, there has to be a falling away first, and the restrainer taken away.

Paul uses logic to clear up this confusion. If events unfold A, then B, then C - and you haven't seen A and B - then you know C hasn't happened yet.

In our next study we will study the great falling away, and the "restrainer" that restrains from allowing the Antichrist to come fully in power and reign. But simply for today, the falling away means the falling away of the church in the last days (again talk about that next study), and the restrainer, is the Holy Spirit in His Church.

But for today let's look at who this man is and what he is all about.

The Antichrist:

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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, (2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Paul did not use the term Antichrist in his letter. This term is used in the New Testament only by John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). But this is the name we use to identify the last great world dictator whom Paul designated as "that man of sin," "the son of perdition" (2 Thes. 2:3), and "that lawless one" (2 Thes. 2:8, literal translation).

1 John 2:18 (NKJV) 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 (NKJV) 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 4:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 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 7 (NKJV) 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.

Satan has been at war with God ever since he, as Lucifer, rebelled against God and tried to capture God's throne (Isa. 14:12-15). He tempted Eve in the Garden and, through her, caused Adam to fall (Gen. 3). In Genesis 3:15, God declared war on Satan and his family ("seed") and promised the coming of the Redeemer who would finally and completely defeat Satan.

Isaiah 14:12-15 (NKJV) ¹² "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

The Greek prefix anti has two meanings: "against", and "instead of". Satan not only opposes Christ, but he wants to be worshipped and obeyed *instead of* Christ. Satan has always wanted to be worshipped and served as God (Isa. 14:14; Luke 4:5-8). He will one day produce his masterpiece, the Antichrist, who will cause the world to worship Satan and believe Satan's lies.

Isaiah 14:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

Luke 4:5-8 (NKJV) ⁵ Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." ⁸ And Jesus answered

and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Judas was called the son of perdition. Satan entered him, Judas became Satan in the flesh. The Antichrist will be Satan in the flesh.

John 17:12 (NKJV) ¹² *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

3 Things - So in our passage the Antichrist is called three things. Just as a summation we see how totally evil he will be. As we look at him, we will see where he is fueled from, the devil himself who wishes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10):

1. Man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
2. Son of perdition (waste) (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
3. The lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

He is a man of sin and soon is against the law of God hence why he is the lawless one just as Jesus said in the last days lawlessness will abound and the law that is spoken is the law of God not just the 10 commandments but all the commandments of God for every word of God is not a suggestion but a command for obedience unto His Holiness. And what a waste of a life and empty and void life when we lived against the way we were designed for God's ways are perfect and pure and leads us into the abundant life as promised in John 10:10, but prediction means waste and this Antichrist be the son of waste therefore he is the son of the father of waste which is the devil the father of all lives but there's a better way instead of God's way

Matthew 24:11-12 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.* ¹² *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

John 8:42-47 (NKJV) ⁴² *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me."* ⁴³ *Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.* ⁴⁴ *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.* ⁴⁵ *But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.* ⁴⁶ *Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?* ⁴⁷ *He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."*

Now, Paul had explained all of this to the believers in Thessalonica, referring them, no doubt, to the relevant Scriptures in the Old Testament. We are fortunate to have the entire Bible to study, so we can get the total picture of Antichrist and his career. Prophetic students may not agree on every detail; but the main facts, when they are related, give us the following description, bibliography, of Antichrist in the last days.

The Antichrist:

- 1.) The peacemaker**
- 2.) The peace-breaker**
- 3.) The persecutor**
- 4.) The prisoner**

1.) The peacemaker (Revelation 6:1-2).

I believe this man is among us today, maybe even in the political arena of local or even national government. He will mostly likely be on the scene before the Rapture of the church, and will probably use the event as a staging point to calm a confused and chaotic world. We know from Revelation and Daniel that he will be a peaceful political leader who unites ten nations of Europe into a strong power bloc (see Rev. 17:12-13).

Revelation 17:12-13 (NKJV) ¹² *"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast."* ¹³ *These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.*

The Antichrist will then broker the peace agreement with Israel.

To fully understand this prophecy of the antichrist brokering a peace agreement with and for Israel, we have to understand the prophecy of the seventy weeks spoken of in the Book of Daniel. To believe the part about the antichrist, then you have to see the part about Jesus Christ, and understand the full context of the seventy weeks.

Daniel 9:20–27 (NKJV) ²⁰ Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, ²¹ yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. ²² And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. ²³ At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: ²⁴ “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. ²⁵ “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

“Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy ‘sevens’ (weeks) (vv.24 -27) provides the chronological frame for Messianic prediction from Daniel to the establishment of the kingdom on earth and also a key to its interpretation.”

The Hebrew word for “weeks” used here is shabua meaning “a unit of measure.” “So here, Seventy Weeks means seventy sevens. It could be seventy sevens of anything. It could be units of days or months or years. In the context of this verse it is plain that Daniel had been reading in Jeremiah about years, seventy years. Jeremiah had been preaching and writing that the captivity would be for seventy years). So then seventy sevens would be 70 times 7, equaling 490 years. But we have the blessings of all the Scriptures and all the history books that we know this is talking about years.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city: We know that Daniel was a Jew, and we know the holy city is a reference to Jerusalem. So this prophecy deals with the nation Israel and God’s prophetic timetable.

Daniel 9:24:

All of verse 24 deal specifically with Jesus Christ. For as we will see only Jesus Christ could fulfill them.

Daniel 9:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

- To finish the transgression: John 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* “As Jesus hung on the cross, He took the wrath of God for our sins. After He completely paid the price for our transgression, He dismissed His Spirit.”
- And to make an end of sins... Jesus made an end of sin for all those who believe.
 - God says in Hebrews 8:12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* Jesus put an end to sin once and for all, no one else could have done this.
 - The verse goes on to say, *and to make reconciliation for iniquity:*
 - Reconciliation means to be made right. Isaiah 59:1-2 *Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* It is because of man’s sin that man is separated from God. And to be separated from God is to be not right with God, but God has provided a way for every man to be right with Him through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- and to bring in everlasting righteousness: “Everlasting righteousness refers to the return of Christ at the end of the 490 years to establish the kingdom.” It is obvious that we do

not have everlasting righteousness right now because evil is still in the world. But the day is coming when God's grace is over, and God will put an end to all evil.

- *And to seal up the vision and prophecy.* "This means that all that is said here will be fulfilled, as well as all other prophecies in Scripture." We must remember that at the time Daniel wrote all this it was several hundred years before the prophecy was fulfilled. This prophecy indeed was fulfilled, which is encouraging to me for I know that all will be fulfilled. I am especially encouraged to know that means that Jesus will be coming back to establish His kingdom.
- *and to anoint the most Holy.* This is a reference to Jesus Christ Himself because in verse 26 there is a reference to the Messiah (called anointed) which is clearly Jesus Christ.

Daniel 9:25:

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

The 70 "sevens" would begin Gabriel said, with the issuing of the decree to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.

The Years Calculated

Here in verse 25 we see a total of 69 seven year periods ($62 + 7 = 69$) ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) (173,880 days) before the Messiah would come. The last 7-year period will be talked about in verse 27, that one deals with the antichrist. Now these years are based on the Babylonian calendar, which is 360 days in a year. Using our Julian calendar, 365.25/yr, that equals 476 years (also note that 1BC to 1 AD is one year, not 2).

Artaxerxes

This decree was the forth of four decrees made by Persian rulers in reference to the Jews. The first was Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C. (2 Chron 36:22—23, Ezra 1:1—4, 5:13). The second was the decree of Darius 1 (522—486) in 520 B.C. (Ezra 6:1,6—12). This decree actually was a confirmation of the first decree. The third was a decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (464-424) in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7:11—26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to the finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. These say nothing about the rebuilding of the city itself. Since an unwalled city was no threat to a military power, a religious temple could be rebuilt without jeopardizing the military authority of those granting permission to rebuild it."

"The fourth decree was also by Artaxerxes Longimanus, issued on **March 14, 445 B.C.** (Neh 2:1-8). On that occasion Artaxerxes granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's city walls. This decree is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25."

"So Secular history tells us the order was given on 14 March 445 BC in our calendar we use today. So the countdown began, and 483 Babylonian years / 476 years using our current calendar, from that day the Messiah would come.

Tiberius Caesar

Now here is a golden nugget in the Scriptures, which at first reading means little to us, but when we place it in the big picture, it becomes golden, The Baptism of Jesus. The baptism of Jesus Christ happened in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

Luke 3:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,

Luke 3:21 (NKJV) ²¹ When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.

Tiberius Caesar was a Roman Emperor and the Romans kept impeccable historical accounts of their empire. We use their secular history writings to tell us that Tiberius began his reign 19 August 14AD. So Jesus began His public ministry in 29AD.

The Passovers

The Jewish Passover was always celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, that month is called Nissian which falls in our March/April calendar.

(Leviticus 23:5 KJV) In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover.

Jesus celebrated 3 Passovers: John 2:23, John 6:4, John 11:55. Based on his baptism in 29AD (15th year of Tiberius Caesar), Jesus first Passover would have been in 30AD, second in 31AD, and His final Passover would have been 32AD.

In that year 32 AD Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on the first day of the week, that day was the 10th of Nissian, for our Julian calendar that comes out to April 6, 32 AD. And on that very day Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was heralded the Messiah.” Thus also fulfilling:

Psalm 118:24–26 (NKJV) ²⁴ This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵ Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

“Prior to this day Jesus had never allowed public worship of Himself. Every time they tried to make Him King He would slip away from them, but the day He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey He actually promoted it.” Luke 19:39-40 *And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

How many days was it from March 14, 445 BC, to April 6, 32AD – **173,880**.

476 years X 365 days..... = 173,740 days
14 March to 06 April (both inclusive)= 24 days
Add for Leap Years.....= 116 days
173, 880 days

Daniel 9:26:

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

“For seventy years Daniel had longed for the restoration of the city and temple of God. Now that it was about to take place his attention was directed to a more distant and loftier peak in the history of redemption. Even a new temple in a rebuilt city made by human hands could be destroyed; Daniel’s eyes were therefore to be fixed on a temple (John 2:19), on one that could not be destroyed (Rev 21:22-27) Daniel was receiving the prophecy of the coming Messiah. But verse 26 starts off with that He would be cut off. “Jesus was crucified that week and rejected by man. Jesus did not receive the kingdom at that time.

The prophecy continues with a description of the judgment that would come on the generation that rejected the Messiah. “The prince to come refers to 70 AD when Titus and the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Just as Jesus prophesied in Luke 19:43-44.

“The Jewish people were then dispersed throughout the world. But Israel is the only nation who kept a nationality without a homeland, for almost 2,000 years they had no place to call home. But May 14, 1948 the Jews were gathered back together into their homeland.” This is a miracle, and God has a reason for it; and that is for final prophetic events leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

It would be a mistake to read the Bible as dry history and miss all that God has for us. Reading this prophecy gives me a deep desire to share the gospel with the lost. As I study prophecy it becomes clearer and clearer that the return of Christ is soon. To the day, to the day He came, and what does that mean to you? As sure as the Prince of Peace came the first time, He will come again the second time.

Now back to the Antichrist, the peacemaker:

Daniel 9:27:

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

He will make a covenant with Israel to protect her and permit her to rebuild her temple. This covenant will be for seven years. *He will temporarily solve the Middle East crisis.* Israel will rebuild her temple in peaceful times. It is the signing of this covenant, not the Rapture of the church that signals the start of Daniel's seventieth week, that seven-year period known as the Day of the Lord.

The one-week talked about in this verse is the final seven year period of the 70 seven year period. This final seven-year period is yet to be fulfilled. "The time gap between the seven year period is known as the age of grace, the Church-period. The reason there is no mention of it here is because remember the beginning of this revelation it told about Daniel and his people. "The proof that this final week has not yet been fulfilled is seen in the fact that Christ definitely relates its main events to His Second Coming (Mat 24:6, 15). Hence, during the interim between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks there must lie the whole period of the Church set forth in the NT. but not revealed in the OT.

"Biblical references to the seventieth week of seven years, which is divided into two halves (v. 27), the latter half being variously designated as "a time, and times, and the dividing of time" ,what we call the Great Tribulation (Dan 7:25; Rev 12:14); forty-two months (Rev 11:2; 13:5); or 1260 days (Rev 11:3; 12:6).

2.) The peace-breaker (Dan. 9:27).

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

After three and one-half years, Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews *and take over their temple.* Up to this point, Antichrist has been a peacemaking leader of ten European nations, obligated to protect Israel. But now he reveals his true character by taking over the Jewish temple and demanding that the world worship him (see Rev. 13).

That is what is meant here in verse 4:

(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) 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.

The Dome of the Rock:

The Temple can be rebuilt without destroying the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim Holy Site. If the Dome was destroyed or turned over, it would cause 1 billion Muslims to unite as one and come against the 5 million Jews living in Israel. The Antichrist will most likely be the one who brokers the deal that allows the Temple to be rebuilt. Many expects and Archaeologist believe that the true site of where the Holy of Holies should be established is not where the Dome is, but 100 yards away, which there is nothing there at this time. The Dome of the Rock would thus sit in what is called the "Court of the Gentiles" and interestingly in Revelation 11:1-2 John was told to measure the Temple, but not to measure the Court of the Gentiles.

Revelation 11:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. ² But leave out the court which is outside the temple,

and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

In Ezekiel 42:20 there is a wall that separates the sanctuary from what is called the profane place. Do you know that inscriptions engraved in the Dome of the Rock, written in Arabic, are profane words, blasphemous words. It says, "God is not begotten, nor does He beget." A direct reference to John 3:16. Hmmm I wonder what they were worried about that they had that inscribed in stone. To which I love this, in that it is inscribed in stone

Ezekiel 42:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, five hundred cubits long and five hundred wide, to separate the holy areas from the common.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NKJV)

⁴ 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.

Not only does the Antichrist show the world that he is so called God of God and he believes at this time that he is gone that is a mighty point to be made the Antichrist fueled by the devil believes that he is God deluded he has become .

He starts as a man then grows himself in to thinking that he is a God man. it's interesting to see that the Antichrist actually proves out but there's only one true God and that is who he is making himself out to be by going into the temple of God that he is saying he is the God of the temple the God of that religion and is it not interesting that he does not go into the Dome of the rock nor does he go into Mecca nor does he go sit under a tree in India nor does he go to the Vatican and give a speech from the balcony he goes one place he goes to the temple the one true and living God. his very actions confirm who the one true God really is Jesus Christ.

John 14:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Well regarding this rebuilt Temple, today the preparations have been made, all the utensils are made or currently being made by a group called the "Temple Mount Faithful". They are even teaching Jewish men how to perform animal sacrifices. They have the Blueprints drawn up already to start building the Temple, they are just waiting for someone to help them.

Since Antichrist will be energized by Satan, it is no surprise that he will seek worship; for Satan has always wanted the worship of the world. There have been various "apostasies" in church history, when groups have turned away from God's truth; but this final rebellion will be the greatest of all. The man of sin will oppose everything that belongs to any other religion, true or false. He will organize a world church that will, by worshiping him, worship Satan. Our Lord predicted this apostasy; He called it "the abomination of desolation" (Matt. **24:15**), a clear reference to Daniel 9:27. The world will wonder at this great leader who, with Satan's power, will perform signs and wonders and deceive the nations.

Matthew 24:15 (NKJV) 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),

3.) The persecutor (Rev. 13:15-17).

After the "abomination of desolation" which will occur three and one-half years after the Antichrist makes his covenant with the Jews. (Dan. 9:27—"in the midst of the week" or three and one-half years.) This will usher in a period of intense persecution and Tribulation. Jesus said, "For then shall be great Tribulation" (Matt. 24:21). Satan will vent his wrath against Israel. He will so control the world's economic system that citizens must bear "the mark of the beast" to be able to buy and sell (Rev. 13:16-17).

Matthew 24:21 (NKJV) ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Revelation 13:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

People often ask, “Will anybody be saved during the seven-year period?” The answer is, yes! Revelation 7:1-8 states that 144,000 Jews will be saved (probably, as was the Apostle Paul, by a dramatic vision of Christ). The Apostle John described a great multitude of Gentiles who will come out of the great Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17) as converted people. Even though the Holy Spirit will be “out of the midst” as the restraining power working in a tremendously weakened church, He will still work with redeeming power.

Revelation 7:9–17 (NKJV) ⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” ¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

However, it will cost dearly to trust Christ and live for Him during that time. Believers will refuse to bow down to the beast’s image and will be slain. They will refuse to wear his mark and thus be unable to get jobs or make purchases. It will be quite a contrast to our situation now when even famous people admit that they are “born again.”

4.) The prisoner (Rev. 19:11-21).

Keep in mind that God has a timetable. Satan will not be permitted to control the world forever. Jesus Christ will return “in power and great glory” and take Antichrist and his associates’ prisoner—and also Satan—and cast them into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3). This will be the climax of the great Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16) during which the nations of the world unite with Satan to fight Jesus Christ. This leads to our next event. The Return of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 20:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Revelation 16:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

The Antichrist:

- 1.) The peacemaker**
- 2.) The peace-breaker**
- 3.) The persecutor**
- 4.) The prisoner**

(2 Thessalonians 2:5 NKJV) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

Remember these things our brother Paul reminds them and us, so we don’t get deceived and confused of what is happening in the world around us that is marching quickly towards these things.

What does all this mean to you, you might say, being that you are going to be raptured and taken away from all this mess? Verse 7 is for the church today, the spirit of the Antichrist is already at work in the world today, and he wants to work against you.

2 Thessalonians 2:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ 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.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Title: What is the Great Falling Away and Removal of the Restrainer in the Last Days?

Book Overview:

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although known throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) 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.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Unfortunately, the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; and this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV) ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

1 Peter 5:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV) ³ But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

And so here we have said in times past what you believe about the last days how they unfold and all the details of him will not change your Salvation but it will change the way you live and we're seeing that with this church who we always studied in the first letter was the model church and now we see the model church is in great danger because they got confused on their doctrine of the last days.

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he addresses the Day of the Lord and the antichrist, and then he addresses what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

- Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation
- Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ
- Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait for His Return

Last Study

In our last study the unveiling of the Antichrist, and we will conclude it this week.

Outline of the Antichrist:

- 1.) The peacemaker
- 2.) The peace-breaker
- 3.) The persecutor
- 4.) The prisoner

But why spend time talking about someone, although great in power, when we will not be here to see him? Because verse 7 said the lawless one is already at work; there is a philosophy, an agenda, a working of the lawless one that (catch this) culminates with this final Antichrist we read about in our passage. A philosophy (a mindset), principals (belief), and practice (the philosophy and principal) put into action. So, what we see and learn of the final Antichrist, gives us understanding of the little (pre) antichrists that are working today. And as we do, we can start to make more sense of this world around us that is getting more and more perilous each day. As we have studied, we are not to be looking for the Antichrist but Jesus Christ; but our understanding of not who the Antichrist is, but his ways, are vital in our understanding of this world that seems to be growing darker and darker.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ 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.

1 John 2:18 (NKJV) 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.

Remember we said the why is there a rapture being the greater question of when is the rapture; well the same vein, not so much who is the Antichrist, but why is he “the” Antichrist.

Today’s Study

Title: What is the Great Falling Away and Removal of the Restrainer in the Last Days?

- What is the Great Falling Away? (2:1-5)
- Who is the Restrainer? (2:6-7)
- What is the Strong Delusion? (2:8-12)
- How Should We Respond? (2:13-17)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What is the Great Falling Away? (2:1-5)

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) 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.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

Remember, today is “the day of man.” For the most part, mankind is having his way and getting his say. But God is about to spoil the party. The day is coming when God will intervene in the affairs of men and have the final say! Daniel 9 speaks of a final seven-year period that will end mankind’s rule of planet earth. God will rain down His wrath on this wicked world, purify His people Israel, and usher in His Kingdom. And that period, yet future – starting at the rapture and culminating with the Kingdom - is “the day of the Lord.”

Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

God will not be mocked! And in the same strength, let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we shall see Him and may we hear those words, well done good and faithful servant.

Galatians 6:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Matthew 25:23 (NKJV) ²³ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Jesus is returning to be glorified where He was crucified. He’ll rule where He was rejected. Even today, Jesus is mocked and ridiculed - and His followers are treated with the same disdain. But on Judgment Day Jesus will be admired by the world. Then, you and I, the Church, will be unveiled as His greatest work - His masterpiece. Irony of ironies, the world will glorify Jesus in us. How the tables will turn!

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) 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.

(2 Thessalonians 2:5 NKJV) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first (v.3):

Paul says before the antichrist is reveal, there has to be a falling away first, and the restrainer taken away.

Paul uses logic to clear up this confusion. If events unfold A, then B, then C - and you haven’t seen A and B - then you know C hasn’t happened yet.

There have been volumes of books and theological discussions on what this means here – falling away. This is one of those hard sayings of the Bible that can wrap you around the axle, and get you all confused.

Some of your Bibles may say:

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NIV) Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

Falling away / rebellion - apostasia, ap-os-tas-ee'-ah; defection from truth ["apostasy"]:-falling away, forsake.

Two meanings:

- to depart from the truth
- or to depart physically.

So the great struggle comes as we read this verse, which is it, the taking of the saints out of the earth, or some think the taking of the Holy Spirit from the earth, while others say it is Christians turning from the truth and no longer living for or after God.

The Great Rebellion - Apostasy

How about the church departing from the truth, the great apostasy. You know what gang, we are seeing it today. We are seeing believers depart from the truth. Pastors leaving the pulpit for homosexual lifestyles, people divorcing because they just don't feel like being married to that person anymore. I was told of a church nearby that allows a member in the Choir to continue in that ministry even though he is going through a sex change process.

2 Timothy 3:1-7 (NKJV) ¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ **having a form of godliness but denying its power.** And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

There are many people going to church today who are playing church, playing Christian, but they are not. Imagine, at the moment the Rapture happens, there will not be one Christian on earth. What will be left, are many church going people who were never believers. These people will throw off any and all association with Christ and the truth, and they will denounce, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The great falling away.

Titus 1:15-16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ *To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.* ¹⁶ *They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

Satan (the little Antichrist, and then the final Antichrist) has a gospel (small g), and it is a repentance less gospel. It is a form of godliness without repentance. Everyone Jesus called in the scripture, He said, follow Me. Repentance means to turn away from and turn to (in salvation that is to turn away from sin and until holiness), and follow means to walk in the same direction and on the same road. To whomever will hear me.... If you do not repent of your sin you will perish in your sin. When you see your sin, as exposed by THE Holy God, it will move you to sorrow, and you will change and turn from it. A person will see they need a Savior to save them from their sin that offends THE Holy God. The Savior is Jesus Christ who died for your sin that offends the Holy God, He traded places with you to rescue you from the wrath to come for breaking His Holy Law, not save a person to continue to live in that sin.

Matthew 3:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ 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.

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The follow away will be the church (so-called), people professing to know God but in works (not repenting) denying God. It will be preached by so-called pastors, in so-called churches, and they will be departing from the faith.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

Who is the Restrainer? (2:6-7)

(2 Thessalonians 2:6 NKJV) And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

(2 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) 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.

The Church Is Gone

How about the “removal of the restrainer”? Let’s just start with what we know is for sure, the Church will be Raptured and removed from this earth before the Antichrist comes because we studied that in our Revelation overview and 1 Thessalonians study. There is a chronological order in Revelation, and we see that in chapter 4 the church is in heaven, and then in chapter 6 the Antichrist comes on the scene.

Revelation 4:1 (NKJV) ¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

Revelation 6:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Be careful, for there are people out there teaching that the church will have to go through all of the tribulation period, or the first half of the tribulation. It is called the Post Tribulation theory, and the Mid-Tribulation theory. They are both wrong because they do not line up with Scripture, with the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 6:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 (NKJV) ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Quite simply, we are not to be looking for the Anti-Christ, but Jesus Christ.

In chapter two, the man of sin comes on to the scene, the Anti-Christ. But before he comes, we must go. That is our reward for going through these trials and tribulations, persecutions and sufferings, because we will stand before the King, and we will return with the King; and I believe that we are the generation that will not see death, but fly in the Rapture.

(Romans 8:18 KJV) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

He is coming for His Bride, and if you can grasp this, He is going to serve you for seven years, while hell is on earth, the Creator of the Universe is going to be serving you in love, a seven-year honeymoon. What do you say, a 7-year honeymoon, tell me more ([see notes below on Jewish wedding](#)).

Four areas God wants us to recall in our minds when we are going through persecution ([notes from chapter 1](#)).

Title: *Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation*

- The Growth in Persecution (1:1-4)
- The Proof in Persecution (1:5)
- The Repayment for Persecution (1:6-9)
- The Reward for Suffering Persecution (1:10-12)

This church had lost/forgotten their hope, the hope of His imminent return, the resultant was that they were troubled and confused.....church don't let that happen to you, never stop living life backwards.

So then comes the question, then who is the "restrainer" spoken of in verses 6-7?

But why spend time talking about someone, although great in power, when we will not be here to see him? Because verse 7 said the lawless one is already at work; there is a philosophy, an agenda, a working of the lawless one that (catch this) culminates with this final Antichrist we read about in our passage. A philosophy (a mindset), principals (belief), and practice (the philosophy and principal) put into action. So, what we see and learn of the final Antichrist, gives us understanding of the little (pre) antichrists that are working today. And as we do, we can start to make more sense of this world around us that is getting more and more perilous each day. As we have studied, we are not to be looking for the Antichrist but Jesus Christ; but our understanding of not who the Antichrist is, but his ways, are vital in our understanding of this world that seems to be growing darker and darker.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ *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.*

1 John 2:18 (NKJV) 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.*

The Greek prefix anti has two meanings: "against", and "instead of". Satan not only opposes Christ, but he wants to be worshipped and obeyed *instead of* Christ. Satan has always wanted to be worshipped and served as God (Isa. 14:14; Luke 4:5-8). He will one day produce his masterpiece, the Antichrist, who will cause the world to worship Satan and believe Satan's lies.

Isaiah 14:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*

Luke 4:5-8 (NKJV) ⁵ *Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." ⁸ And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve." "*

The volume of books written say it is one of two things, the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth, or the church is removed from the earth:

The Spirit Is Here & Everywhere

Now, again by using Scripture to interpret Scripture, it can not be the removing of the Holy Spirit.

Everywhere and anywhere, you go, the Holy Spirit is there:

Psalms 139:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.*

Without the Holy Spirit, nobody could or would get saved during the Tribulation period (and today for that matter). We know that that is not going to be the case, many, many people will be getting saved during the tribulation period. People can not come to the Lord without the Holy Spirit leading them, thus the Holy Spirit must and will still be present during the Tribulation Period:

John 16:7-11 (NKJV) ⁷ *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

He testifies of Jesus Christ being the Messiah, the Son of God. The Spirit is needed to testify in the Tribulation of why the judgement has come, for it is the wrath of the Lamb for rejecting Him, and the Spirit will tell people this is why you are experiencing this.

John 15:26-27 (NKJV) ²⁶ *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

In Revelation, we see many people got saved during the Tribulation period:

Revelation 7:3–4 (NKJV) ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." ⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

Revelation 7:9–17 (NKJV) ⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen." ¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

So from Scripture, we see that it is not the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is the church that is restraining today. It is the church as the people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Scripture tells us, we are the salt and light of the world:

Matthew 5:13–15 (NKJV) ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house."

Despite its weakness and seeming failure never underestimate the importance of the church in the world. People who criticize the church do not realize that the presence of people of God in this world gives unsaved people opportunity to be saved. The presence of the church is delaying the coming of judgment.

Have you ever walked into a room and the conversation stopped? Have people apologized to you for using the Lord's name in vain. How about the hostility they have for you, for no reason, other than your presence brings them conviction. What can we say about America's relationship with Israel. How about this nation, that is still one nation under God, do you have any idea what the world would be like without the United States?.

So the restrainer is gone, raptured, and the stage is set for the coming of the "Man of Sin".

Christian, please take this away today.... Your witness is still powerful, even as weak as it seems to be, for it and us together, the church, still has enough power that it is keeping (restraining) the Antichrist from coming into his full power. Remember that when you share the Gospel, you still have power. Remember that when you stand up for the Word of God and you get mocked, you still have power, and the Word is still piercing them because the Spirit is upon you. We still have power church, let's use it for all its power to reach the lost, to bring prodigals home, to overcome sin in the world.

What is the Strong Delusion? (2:8-12)

(2 Thessalonians 2:8 NKJV) 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.

Paul starts with the clarity that the Antichrist is no match for the Lord, and God will consume and destroy him in a breath – aka God won't even be out of breath when He whips him, nor will God even break a sweat, because our God rules and reigns in power:

At end of Tribulation at Battle of Armageddon:

Revelation 19:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

At the end of the 1,000-year Millennial reign, at the Great White throne (final judgement) before the creating of the new heaven and new earth:

Revelation 20:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

(2 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

The antichrist will come with signs and wonders and miracles. People will be more enticed with the sparkle than the substance – the substance being the truth of God. People will believe his lies, and God will not violate their free-will, and let them choose the antichrist over Him.

Remember when Moses turned his rod into a serpent, Pharaoh's magicians duplicated the feat. The Antichrist will be a miracle man. He'll perform wonders, but "lying wonders." God uses miracles to draw men to the truth. Satan uses them to sell his lies.

That is why God has given us His Word. Part of the falling away will be churches that are worried about numbers and dollars, and will sell an experience and sellout preaching the Word, all the while thinking they are doing the work of God.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(2 Thessalonians 2:10 NKJV) and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

It's sad, but once a person rejects the truth, they'll fall for anything. This means people alive in the Great Tribulation will be vulnerable to Satan's deceptions.

(2 Thessalonians 2:11 NKJV) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

Notice, this is not just a lie, but "the lie." Perhaps it's the very first lie - the lie that upended utopia. Satan convinced Eve that God was holding her back. That He didn't want her to eat the fruit or she would be like Him! And this is the ultimate lie: that Satan is the good guy and God is the bad guy. That Christianity is evil. The Bible is just a way to oppress individual freedom and keep humans from reaching their full potential.

Genesis 3:1–7 (NKJV) ¹ Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

(2 Thessalonians 2:12 NKJV) that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Don't be deceived why people believe the lie (believe meaning to put their faith and trust in), not that they fall, for they will want what they want, because..... they love their sin!

John 3:16–21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

I believe the strong delusion God sends them, is Satan himself. God allows him, just as He did in the garden, so He does, He lets people chose, and does not force them into a personal relationship with Him.

How Should We Respond? (2:13-17)

(2 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV) 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,

(2 Thessalonians 2:14 NKJV) to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 2:15 NKJV) Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

(2 Thessalonians 2:16 NKJV) 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,

(2 Thessalonians 2:17 NKJV) comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Here again Paul commands the Church to what he told them in the last letter, to what they failed to do and caused them this fear and confuse:

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Application for us today as we studied about the Antichrist.

Son of Perdition.

Perdition means waste and destruction. That is what the devil wants to do, he wants to waste and destroy anything that brings glory to God. He wants to destroy your marriage, your body, your mind, your home, your children, anything that will bring glory to God.

Judas, the son of perdition, the son of waste and destruction, but what do we find him saying in John 12, ohhh what a waste, that money you wasted on the feet of Jesus, that money could have went to the poor. But we know he was the keeper of the bag, and stealing from it. Yet he says ohh what a waste to pour this out on the Lord's feet. People will say to you, what a waste, you could have spent that money on a new bicycle, what a waste you could have went out to dinner and treated yourself why send it to a missionary. What a waste, you could have went to Hawaii instead of on the mission trip. What a waste not enjoying your body. What a waste waking up early to pray. What a waste going to Bible studies when you could be at the beach our BBQ on your deck.....what a waste.

Precious people, let me tell you this, nothing you do for the Lord is ever a waste, the sons of perdition will say what a waste, but the Lord says what He said.....Let her alone, she blesses me.

John 12:1–8 (NKJV) ¹ Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. ⁴ But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and

given to the poor?"⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial."⁸ For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

The Temple

The name of the Antichrist isn't the issue, the spirit of the antichrist is the issue. The spirit of the antichrist is at work today all around us.

Well what does that have to do with me you might say, you told me I'd be raptured and escape this whole mess.

1 John 2:18 (NKJV)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.

The antichrist wants to come into your temple and desecrate it.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV)¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

You will say I know what needs to be done, I don't need to pray about it. I know what needs to be done about my child, my marriage, my body.....I know what's best for me. The antichrist wants to be in place of God, not always against. We will rule our temple we say, and then the tribulation starts in our life. We say this is what I will do, rather than God what do you want to do with me. The spirit of the antichrist will ruin and waste any temple, we have to say this temple is dedicated to the Lord,

We sit in amazement, they had the Scriptures, yet they still missed the coming of the Messiah, if only they had read the Bible they could have received Him. Yet today, we have more than they did, we have all the Scriptures, yet there will be some that still miss Him. How could we miss the Coming Prince.

Just as Jesus kept that appointment down to the day to ride into Jerusalem to take on the sins of the world, He will be faithful to the exact day to meet you in the air.

Joshua be Strong

And Thirdly my last application for us is the reminder of what we saw when the children of Israel were done with their 40 years of wilderness wandering and Joshua was going to lead them into their inheritance there in the promised land of God. And Joshua reminds the two and a half tribes of the commitment that was required of them that they had made to Moses and now was time for them to fulfill and that that is they were not to stay in there ease and comfort of the land they received on the East side of the Jordan River but that they were still required to cross the River with their brethren and fight with them so that they could receive their inheritance. And Christian you may be saved you may have received your inheritance of Salvation but I believe there is an application here for each and every one of us is that there are still people or do an inheritance and we need to go fight for them that they may receive their inheritance and that is the inheritance of Salvation we need to go tell them the gospel the good news to save them from their sin that he came to make us holy because we could not make ourselves holy and acceptable unto the Lord.

Joshua 1:10-15 (NKJV)¹⁰ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,¹¹ "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"¹² And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying,¹³ "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.'¹⁴ Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them,¹⁵ until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Chapter 3

Passage: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Title: Exhortation while We Wait

Book Overview:

Second Thessalonians, written approximately 53AD to the church in Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were grateful to God for Paul's first letter, as he commended them on their faith, their labor of love, and taught them the deeper things pertaining to the Rapture. But this church, although known throughout the whole region for their faith, was not loved and respected by all for their faith, in fact they were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Can you relate to that today? This persecution and tribulation left this model church with many questions, and as we will read in chapter two, the main reason for the confusion and troubling was due to false teachers telling them erroneous things, some even sending letters signing Paul's name to them.

The Theme and purpose of this book:

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) 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.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) 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,

The persecution for this church grew so bad that some believers thought that they were living in the times of the Great Tribulation, that they had missed the Rapture. When the letter arrived claiming to be from Paul, stating that the Day of the Lord was actually present, fear and confusion entered many.

Unfortunately, the model church lost their hope, and now in the midst of trials and persecution, they are troubled and confused; and this my friends will always be the resultant when you lose the hope of His imminent return, you will be troubled and confused. Have we lost our hope, or maybe we have lost our focus of the soon return of Christ, maybe the temporal is more important than the eternal (and that goes for the any and all spiritual things in our lives how the temporal near-term things can supersede and trump the eternal spiritual things of God in our life.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV) ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Other believers concluded that since the Lord's Second Coming was so near, they ought to quit their jobs and spend time waiting for Him. This meant that the other members were under an extra burden to care for them. Satan was working overtime, as a lion, he was seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:7-8), and as the serpent, he was seeking to deceive (2 Cor 11:3).

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

1 Peter 5:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV) ³ But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

And so here we have said in times past what you believe about the last days how they unfold and all the details of him will not change your Salvation but it will change the way you live and we're seeing that with this church who we always studied in the first letter was the model church and now we see the model church is in great danger because they got confused on their doctrine of the last days.

It was in response to these needs that Paul writes them this second letter. He began with their most pressing need, the persecution they were experiencing because of their faith. Then he

addresses the Day of the Lord and the antichrist, and then he addresses what they are to be doing while they wait.

So the outline for this book:

- Chapter 1 – Encouragement in Persecution and Tribulation
- Chapter 2 – Exposing the Anti-Christ
- Chapter 3 – Exhortation While We Wait for His Return

Today we study the “Exhortations While We Wait for His Return”.

- While we wait, we should be the Praying Believer (3:1-2)
- While we wait, we should be the Trusting Believer (3:3-7)
- While we wait, we should be the Working Believer (3:8-12)
- While we wait, we should be the Enduring Believer (3:13-18)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1.) While we wait, we should be the Praying Believer (3:1-2)

(2 Thessalonians 3:1 NKJV) Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,

Paul says finally indicating that he was changing the subject and bringing this letter to a close, and we will see with several very specific exhortations of what to be doing while they/we are waiting for His soon return.

V.1 - Run swiftly - I like the Bible's depictions of the Bible... Jeremiah says the Word of God is like a hammer... Hebrews tells us it's like a sharp, two-edged sword... The psalmist says it's sweeter than the honeycomb... And here we're told God's Word has 4.2 speed in the 40 yard dash. It "runs swiftly." It spreads quickly. Let's pray that God's Word spreads swiftly this year.

Paul is asking them to pray that he may proclaim God's Word freely, that it would not be hindered.....hindered by whom, himself. Paul isn't asking them to pray for his program, but his teaching. Today many preachers are teaching to entertain the people, rather than teach the people. Teaching is the reason God calls them Pastors and Teachers (Eph 4), not entertainers.

Paul said I'll teach, you pray. He didn't ask for money, he didn't ask for his radio program, he asked them to pray.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon – who became known as the prince of preachers, who in the 1800's, at the age of 17 his church was already 3,000. His church was in London, called the Metropolitan Tabernacle. One day some other pastors came to visit to find out what and how God was working through this church, which at this time the Tabernacle seated 7,000 and had a couple

Sunday services. They seen this rather stout man wearing bib overalls, thinking him to be the janitor, and said sir, can you show us where the power plant is to this church (power plant being where the heating and air conditioning system was for the building). He took them downstairs, though some corridors opened a door and said here is the power plant behind the Metropolitan tabernacle. Expecting to see some massive steam generator, they were surprised to see 200 men on their knees praying that Sunday afternoon, for the evening service. To their surprise at that evening service the man in the overall bibs stepped up to the pulpit to teach.

They said that while he preached, if he felt his message lacked power, he would stomp his foot on the wood floor.....for right underneath the pulpit was the that prayer room, and every time he taught there would be a room full of people praying at the same time.

Do you want to see God do a work in this ministry, then pray for this ministry. Every praise report that comes out of this ministry will be credit to your account in heaven.

Great preachers do not make great congregations; but great congregations make great preachers.

I'm encouraged because I was reading something written by him, and he said he had preached sermons that he went home and wept over feeling they were so bad, but later to find out the Lord moved in people's heart and many got saved from that very message he wept over.

Paul said to them, in you there is power. Please pray not just for the Pastor/Teacher, but pray also for the Sunday school teachers, for the Assisted Living teachers, to the small group leaders.

(2 Thessalonians 3:2 NKJV) and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

Acts 16&17 tells us who these men were. What did they do, they went and stirred up strife to get Paul in trouble? They were upset because Paul was ruining their personal lives financially. They were upset because Paul was turning people from the grips of religion into a personal relationship with their Creator, so they attack to shut him down and his message

Acts 16:18–19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. ¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

Acts 17:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

We see those people around us today, they stir things up because we are making their lives uncomfortable. When faced with sin, a man's true heart will be revealed.

They are unreasonable and wicked. Proverbs sums this up, you can't reason with a fool. *(Proverbs 18:2 NKJV) A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.*

(Proverbs 23:9 KJV) Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

(Proverbs 26:4 NKJV) Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.

They will twist your story, take your biblical principles and statements, and twist them to other people to turn them against you. Believer don't waste your time arguing or defending, Paul here says not all have faith, just leave them, and go pray for them. Don't complain, don't explain, if you start defending yourself you will never get to stop. Do what the Lord says, and let the Lord take care of your reputation.

2.) While we wait, we should be the Trusting Believer (3:3-7)

(2 Thessalonians 3:3 NKJV) But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

Wicked and faithless men abound - and they often oppose us - but the Lord is an All Pro left tackle. Hey, if you follow Jesus, He has your blindside. He guards you and I from getting sacked by the devil. But as Paul asks for prayer for himself, we should too, and we should pray for each other, daily and regularly... Lord I pray for _____ that you cover their blind-side, cover them from the attack of the evil one today

The Lord is faithful to protect you from the evil one, and the evil people. He is not just the Lord of Good Friday, but resurrection Sunday. He is alive and is living in your life.

774,747 words in the Bible:

- Psalm 118:8 – the middle verse of the Bible
- *Psalm 118:8 (NKJV) ⁸ It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.*

Why is that the middle verse, because that is what it is all about, trusting in Him, not trusting in man. The problem with us is that we look upon man for our satisfaction, and we get disappointed, let down, and upset with people. The Scripture says put your trust in the Lord, not man.

(2 Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV) And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

Notice the link here, the Lord's faithfulness and protection is based on the obedience to the Word. When you leave His word, you leave His protection. We joke the angels leave the car at 65. You can't ask God where He was when that guy/gal broke your heart, if you were having sexual relations with them. Or where was the Lord when your marriage failed, yet you were never home. Why you lost your job if you were not giving them 8 for 8.

Who is on the throne will determine the kingdom you live in. If you are ruling and reigning on the throne then your kingdom will be what it is.....Failures, depressions, disappointments. If Jesus rules on the throne and there are hardships, though it may be difficult, there will be a peace because of this verse.....I know the Lord is faithful, and He is on the throne in my heart.

This word command here in verse 4 means a military order passed down from a superior officer. Paul will use this word in verse 6, 10, and 12 also. Christ is the captain of our salvation; we are His soldiers (2 Tim 3-4). In a battle it is not enough for only the officers to fight; every man must do his duty. This is true in the work of the church. What if an army was run with the same lack of obedience, order, and discipline that we so often see in the church? It would never win a war. If soldiers attended drill whenever they felt like it, they would never be equipped to face the enemy. If the recruits disobeyed their officer's order the way some church members disobey the Word of God, they would be court-martialed. A soldier obeys primarily out of loyalty and fear, but a Christian has much higher motives.....obedience

2 Thessalonians 3:4 (NKJV) ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (NKJV) ⁶ But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

2 Thessalonians 3:12 (NKJV) ¹² Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

(2 Thessalonians 3:5 NKJV) Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Better translated, "in the waiting of Christ".

2 Thessalonians 3:5 (KJV 1900) ⁵ And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

The people who are truly content in life are the ones who are waiting for the return of Christ; they have the patience of Christ. They are not all worried about getting their stuff today, they know they will get what they truly desire when he comes....they will get Him face-to-face.

(2 Thessalonians 3:6 NKJV) But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

(2 Thessalonians 3:7 NKJV) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

Do the things we commanded you.....You are not to hang out with the disorderly, they will surely take you down.

Also, you witness to them on your terms, not theirs. There is no need for Christians going into bars, having a few beers, so that they can witness to their friends. God will open the opportunities outside those environments to protect you from what's inside those environments.

And, the folks who caused the confusion in this church needed to be disciplined. And if a wayward believer resists correction the final remedy is to exclude them from the fellowship. They can no longer be part of the church. You wake someone up and bring them to repentance by removing the protection of the church family - and letting the rebel taste the consequences of their error.

Verse 7 – Paul set the example for them. That is bold of Paul to say such a thing. He made such a bold claim to the church in Corinth also, as he said to them to imitate him as he imitates Christ. You want to find a new power in your life live in such a way that you can say to any person imitate me as I imitate Christ because when you know the people were watching and then you can challenge them to watch and then to do what they see then you will be living in a whole different plane before your coworkers before your children before your spouse before your family because you will be living in such a way that you know people are watching, and you want to preach a sermon with actions not words.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV) ¹ Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

The word for imitate is "mimic" in our English translation. It is also a word used to make an image such as on to a coin. When I pick up the coin and it has an image of George Washington on it; Paul says if they struck a coin in his image, it would look like an image of Christ. That is way it should be for all of us as we are all called to be image bearers. If they wanted to make a coin that was reflective of me, whose face would they use... mine of the Lord's?

Genesis 1:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

3.) While we wait, we should be the Working Believer (3:8-12)

Paul sets the example for work

(2 Thessalonians 3:8 NKJV) nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,

(2 Thessalonians 3:9 NKJV) not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

Paul was a pastor, and a pastor had the right to be compensated by his Church. But for the betterment of the Body, Paul was willing to forego those rights. In fact, Paul was bi-vocational and

worked a secular job. He was a tent-maker by day, a pastor by night, and as a result a burden to no one.

Labor and toil – it wasn't easy, but we did it for your sake Paul says. We worked hard for an example that you too should work hard. The minister is worthy of his wages (Luke 10:7, Gal 6:6, 1 Tim 5:17-18), but Paul chose to work to set the example for others.

Luke 10:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.

(2 Thessalonians 3:10 NKJV) For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

Many people there in Thessalonica had quit their jobs because they thought the Lord's return was going to happen any day now.

Why would God find it so important to talk about work, while this church was going through tribulations and persecution, and He is talking about the antichrist and to be ready for the rapture. The reason, because work is what we are to be doing while we wait.

Christian the challenge to you today is are you giving your employer eight hard hours of work for the eight hours of pay they are giving you.

The Scripture is clear, no work, no food. Notice it says "will not" work, it doesn't say can not work, or could not work. There are people who can not work, and the Bible has much to say about compassion and taking care of those in need. But here Paul is talking about people who want to take the free ride.

Here is another Jewish Law (the Law of Gleaning).

(Leviticus 19:9 NKJV) 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.

(Leviticus 19:10 NKJV) 'And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

The law of the times said a landowner could only harvest the field once and you could not pick anything off the ground. So the poor could pick up anything that was left. Remember the first harvest not everything would be ripened yet; so people could come later and still be provided for. This was their form of welfare, but if you notice, no work, no food. No freebies.

There are many people who need welfare, but unfortunately many today are abusing the system. Welfare is allowing them to be lazy and ungrateful. For many, welfare enables them to live a life that is un-pleasing to God.

Parents apply this to your kids, don't wait on them hand and foot, give them everything they want, submit to them when they whine or put on a fit. What you do is enable them to develop a pattern for life. A pattern of selfishness, and that it is for others to serve them. They will carry this into their marriages, and every other aspect of their life

(2 Thessalonians 3:11 NKJV) For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

(2 Thessalonians 3:12 NKJV) Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

When a person who could/should be working and they don't, they become a busybody getting into everyone else's business. In the garden, God in His wisdom said you will work with the sweat of your brow. God in His wisdom knew that after the fall, we would need to stay busy, or we would be getting into everyone's business. Even in the curse, God gives a blessing.

You know it only takes a couple busybodies to cost much pain and suffering to other people. These people, Paul is saying, should be working. We gave them an example, but they didn't heed it. They are out mooching off generous people, taking advantage of them, when they should be working.

You know what happens with busybodies, they have nothing to talk about, so they just start picking away at other people. Pointing out this fault or that fault, complaining about this and complaining about that.

A few years back, at the space center two woodpeckers stopped a Space shuttle flight. They had gone out and pecked some 190 holes into the external fuel tank of the shuttle. NASA engineers were concerned that ice would form during tanking in those holes, and then break the foam off which would fall and damage the shuttle itself. They had to roll the shuttle back into the Assembly building, repair the holes, then roll about out to the launch pad. The flight was delayed for weeks and cost the taxpayers tens of millions of dollars.....all for two woodpeckers.

People do this in the church, they are not involved in any ministries, not busy with their hands, and instead they just sit around being a busybody in the church stirring up all kinds of strife and division. They say why is he doing that.....peck, peck, peck. Why don't they do this..... peck, peck, peck. Why is he teaching and not me..... peck, peck, peck.

It only takes a few of them to greatly weaken the work God is doing in that ministry.

4.) While we wait, we should be the Enduring Believer (3:13-18)

(2 Thessalonians 3:13 NKJV) But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible (176 verses); the whole chapter is on the power and beauty of the Word. The second is Numbers chapter 7 (89 verses). The Lord not only remembers what you have giving unto Him, but He also records it. Verse after verse, we read the account of what was given; God did not consider it a waste of space to tell us what each person gave. God has it written for all mankind from generation to generation to read.

Hebrews 6:10–12 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Remember the Son of Perdition, he said ohh what a waste. God said it is not a waste, it will be rewarded.

You know on April 14th, when I'm doing my taxes, I am always so glad that I gave. Yes there were plenty of times that it was tough to write that check, but on April 14th I am always so glad that I was faithful month after month.

You may say I don't have a lot of money, nor a lot of talent, but God doesn't care. You at least have the ability to go to a nursing home, soup kitchen, etc and listen to someone who is lonely. God will remember you good work, it will not go unnoticed.

You may say all I care about is getting into heaven, I really don't care about rewards and crowns. I want to do well for me today, here and now. I want to use my time and money on me. You may say that now, but listen, you will care about on that day. Have you ever gotten a Christmas gift from someone that you didn't buy for. Have you ever gone to a birthday party and not taken a gift, you will care on that day. Your heart will break when stand before the Bema Seat (judgment seat of Christ) and you have nothing to give to Him. The what seat?

Believer, there is a judgment for you to come. Not a judgment of sin and salvation, for that was paid in full on the cross. Not the white Throne judgment spoken of in Revelation 20, that is for all those who never received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Revelation 20:11–15 (NKJV) ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

But the Believer will face the “Bema Seat” the “Judgment Seat of Christ” and be judged according to your works here on earth.

Remember our Resurrection/Rapture Study, this passage is written to believers:

2 Corinthians 5:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.* ⁹ *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.* ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

Again, written to the Church:

1 Corinthians 3:11–15 (NKJV) ¹¹ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* ¹² *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* ¹³ *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* ¹⁴ *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.* ¹⁵ *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV) ²⁴ *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.* ²⁵ *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.* ²⁶ *Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.* ²⁷ *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

Just a thought, it is after the new heaven and new earth that there will be no more tears:

What does it mean to you right here and now? It means down you will go. From my years in ministry and walking this walk, growing weary will take you down.

I see that the marriages that are doing well are the couples that are serving together. Me and my wife read more, pray more, we appreciate our moments alone so much more, because they are so much fewer. We become more like Jesus, therefore there is less of us, and more of Him in our marriage. Less of me is always a good thing in a marriage.

You singles and youth may say I don't have money to give, then give of your time to others. The more you give of yourself, the less time you have to think about what you don't have, that boyfriend, husband.

Those of you who are 5 days, 5 weeks, 5 years drug free, don't grow weary of doing good. Those of you being pure, those of you who have quit smoking, those of you who have guarded your tongue from cursing,.....don't grow weary, your reward is near.

We should all long to hear those words:

(Matthew 25:21 NKJV) *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

In driving piles to build bridges or piers, a machine is used by which a huge weight is lifted up and then made to fall upon the head of the pile. Of course the higher the weight is lifted the more powerful is the blow which it gives when it descends. Now, if we wish to impact our age and society with ponderous blows, we must see to it that we are uplifted as near to God as possible. All our power will depend upon the elevation of our spirits. Prayer, meditation, devotion, communion, are like a windlass to wind us up aloft. It is not lost time which we spend in such sacred exercises, for we are thus accumulating force, so that when we come down to our actual labor for God, we shall descend with an energy unknown to those to whom communion is unknown. – Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Don't grow weary,

Philippians 3:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

(2 Thessalonians 3:14 NKJV) And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

(2 Thessalonians 3:15 NKJV) Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The word of God says that if anybody is a busybody, you are not to have them over for dinner. The reason is they will start spewing their garbage all over you. If people don't have anyplace to complain, then they will stop. The idea is they will figure it out, hey nobody invites me over anymore, I wonder if there is something wrong with me. Remember I told you before how they rob you, for what goes in your mind via your ears or mind, it will stick to you.

So here's a key in withdrawing fellowship the believer must not withdraw their love.

It is not prayer requests, it is about restoration, and you want to do something about it, that is different. If you want to point the dirt out on someone else's feet, then know this, the only person who has the right to point it out, are those who are willing to humble themselves, wrap a robe around themselves, and bend down to wash their feet lovingly.

(2 Thessalonians 3:16 NKJV) Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

(2 Thessalonians 3:17 NKJV) The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

The Thessalonians had been duped by a false alarm. They'd received a letter supposedly from Paul, that wasn't. Here he tells them how authenticate his letters - check the signature.

Paul dictated his letters, but at the end of each letter he would take the quill in hand and sign it personally. His signature was his stamp of authenticity.

(2 Thessalonians 3:18 NKJV) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Verse 1 we started with grace and we end here with grace. It's all about grace.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we study the "Exhortations While We Wait for His Return".

- While we wait, we should be the Praying Believer (3:1-2)
- While we wait, we should be the Trusting Believer (3:3-7)
- While we wait, we should be the Working Believer (3:8-12)
- While we wait, we should be the Enduring Believer (3:13-18)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

***Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)** ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Study Notes: The Jewish Wedding

He is coming for His Bride, and if you can grasp this, He is going to serve you for seven years, while hell is on earth, the Creator of the Universe is going to be serving you in love, a seven-year honeymoon. What do you say, a 7 year honeymoon, tell me more.

The Wedding Feast

June—the season of weddings! But no wedding can hold a candle to the wedding in the passage before us. Following the description of the Tribulation in Revelation chapters 6-19, we come to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

“Wait a minute,” you say, “if the Book of Revelation does indeed flow in chronological order, since the Church is raptured in chapter 4 to begin her seven-year honeymoon with the Lord, why does the Marriage Feast not take place until chapter 19?”

The answer lies in an understanding of the Jewish marriage tradition, which comprised three stages... The Engagement, The Betrothal, and The Wedding itself.

The Engagement

Historically, Jewish children would often be engaged by the age of two or three—sometimes before they were even born. That is, families, which shared the same values and social standing, would say, “If you have a daughter and I have a son, let’s agree right now that they will marry each other.

You see, the Jewish people looked at marriage as far too important to be left up to the decision-making skills of young adults. So it was up to the father specifically to arrange with other fathers to whom his son or daughter would be engaged.

Scripture records a few cases, however, when men chose their own brides. But every marriage ended in heartache or disaster...

Against his father’s wishes, Esau married an Ishmaelite (Genesis 28:8-9).

Jacob fell in love with Rachel at first sight, but ended up working for her for seven years before unknowingly marrying her sister (Genesis 29).

Samson “loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah” (Judges 16:4).

Since the result of a man choosing his own wife without the directive of his father often resulted in tragedy or difficulty, it became the norm for the father to select his child’s spouse.

The Betrothal

The engagement led to the betrothal—usually between the ages of twelve and fifteen for a young lady. At this point, bride and groom would perhaps meet for the first time, as the father of the groom would negotiate a ‘mohar,’ or the bride price. The price would be based upon three variables:

First, it would be predicated upon the wealth and worth of the groom’s father. If the father of the groom was a rich man, he would pay a high price so as not to look like a cheapskate.

Secondly, the price would be determined by the bride’s worth. If she was attractive or otherwise gifted, her bride price would be higher.

Thirdly, the price was based upon the groom's work. That is, in some cases it was up to the groom to pay the price.

Because Jacob chose his own bride he paid for her himself with seven years of labor (Genesis 29:18).

He who marries my daughter must conquer the enemy city of Kirjath-sepher, declared Caleb. Othniel took the challenge and won (Joshua 15:16).

A Gentile named Shechem who fell in love with Jacob's daughter, Dinah, was informed her price would be the circumcision of himself and all of the men in his city as a sign of identification with the Jews (Genesis 34:15)

A portion of the bride price would go to the bride to use as security in the event she was divorced or widowed. This explains why Rachel and Leah accused their uncle Laban of devouring their money (Genesis 31:15).

The remainder of the bride price went to the bride father in compensation for the fact that, unlike a son, his daughter wouldn't be able to carry on his name, help defend him, or take over the family business.

After at least a portion of the bride price was laid upon the table, a contract would be signed to further validate the agreement. Then, the prospective bride and groom would sip from a single cup of wine, at which point they were legally betrothed.

For the following year, the couple would not drink together, drink of the vine, nor live together. The bride would begin to wear a veil, signifying she was taken. She would also begin to prepare her wedding dress, sometimes from material provided by the groom (Ezekial 16:10).

Meanwhile the groom would begin construction on what is called in Hebrew "a little mansion" – which is a room built onto his father's house. When the father decided the preparations were complete, his son, wearing a crown, would be sent off to his wedding (Song of Solomon 3:11).

The Wedding

Although the bride didn't know the exact day of her wedding, she knew it would most likely be in autumn to allow for the completion of harvest, and that it would most likely be on a Wednesday. Wednesday was the day couples got married because Thursday was the day the courts were opened. If it was discovered on her wedding day that the bride was not a virgin, she could easily be divorced the next day.

As the preparation of her "little mansion neared completion, the bride would begin to gather her friends to await the arrival of her groom.

On the day of his wedding, the groom and his friends—particularly his best man—would walk through the streets with trumpets blaring, taking the most circuitous route to the bride's house. Already attired in her wedding dress, when the bride heard the sounding of the trumpet, she would arise and receive a blessing from her father. Then she would run out the door to be met by the groom in the streets.

Together, they would make their way to the "huppah"—the four-postered canopy under which they would be married. The ceremony itself consisted not of vows, which were Roman and Greek in tradition, but simply a reading of the contract which had been drawn up a year before, along with a blessing.

The procession would then continue on to the “little mansion” where the best man would stand outside the door while the marriage was consummated. Why would he stand outside the door? To wait for word from the groom that the bride was a virgin—as evidenced by a blood-spotted bed sheet. If the bride were indeed a virgin, the wedding celebration would continue for seven days. If not, the guests would go home, and the bride would face either divorce or death by stoning.

Although seven days spent in an addition to one’s father’s house while friends and family partied just outside the door may not sound like the ideal honeymoon to us, in the Jewish culture, being waited on for a week was glorious. You see, this would be the only time in their entire lives when the bride and groom would do no labor. Remember, there were no vacations in those days—no holiday cruises, no jets, no Maui. The one and only time people were able to kick back was during their marriage week. During this week, the bride would never be seen. The groom, on the other hand, would occasionally come out and greet the guests before bringing back food and gifts to his bride.

After seven days, the groom would present his bride to his family, friends, and community, at which time the marriage feast would begin.

Looking again at this process, it becomes a picture-perfect analogy of our Bridegroom’s relationship with us...

Just as the Jewish father chose whom his child would marry, it’s mind-boggling to realize that our heavenly Father elected us to be the bride for His Son (I Peter 1:2). As proof of this intent, He paid the bride price, based first upon His wealth. How rich is God? All the gold in neither the world nor the galaxies in the universe would begin to reflect His wealth. Instead, the “mohar” God paid for us was something of which He had only one: His Son (John 3:16).

Secondly, the price had to be according to the bride’s worth.

There is a story of an Arabian man who had a daughter so plain that he doubted anyone would ever want to marry her. One day, however, he received word that a man from a distant village was so taken with her that he was coming to see him with bride price in hand. Prepared to take whatever he was offered, imagine the father’s surprise when the visitor offered him six cows for his daughter’s hand.

“Six cows!” thought the father in amazement. “The highest price ever paid in this village has been three cows!”

So it was that the father gave his daughter’s hand in marriage.

Two years later, the daughter and her husband returned to her home village where everyone was startled by her exquisite beauty.

“How is she so beautiful?” they wondered.

The answer was simple: because her husband saw her as worth six cows, a six-cow beauty is what she became.

That’s how God views me. I don’t understand it, but I rejoice in the fact that God looks at me and says, “I am in love with you so passionately that I’ll give everything to bring you into the Kingdom in order that you might live with Me forever and ever throughout eternity.” To this end, God gave not six cows or six galaxies. He gave Himself.

Thirdly, the bride price was determined by the groom’s work. Jesus outdid Jacob five-fold when He labored on earth as a Man for thirty-three years. And He not only conquered a city as did Othniel, but conquered the whole world when He thrust Himself into the very heart of Hell to pay

the price for my sin (Ephesians 4:9). Finally, when God became Man to identify with us in the Incarnation, it was an infinitely greater step than Shechem took to identify with the Jews, for Jesus was not only afflicted momentarily, but slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

The bride price paid, just as a contract was signed and a cup of wine shared by the bride and groom in a Jewish betrothal, we hold in our hands the “contract” of the Word of God, along with Jesus’ promise that He would not drink of the cup again until He did so with us in the Kingdom (Matthew 26:29). And as a bride wore a veil which, although it obscured her vision, signified her relationship with the groom, so at present we see through a glass darkly, but shall one day see our Bridegroom face to face (I Corinthians 13:12).

Unlike the Jewish bride who worked for a year to fashion a garment for her wedding, there is nothing we can add to the garment given to us, as we are invited to “put on Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14) and robe ourselves in His righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

Like the groom who added a “little mansion” to his father’s house, Jesus went to His Father’s house to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). Then, at the time appointed by the Father, the Son, wearing many crowns (Revelation 19:12), will come for us, His bride (Mark 13:32). Like the Jewish bride, we don’t know the day or hour of His return, but like her, we know the season (1 Thessalonians 5:1). We understand the place of Israel, the problems in Jerusalem, the coming together of the European Union. We understand from Bible prophecy that the Lord’s coming is near, even at the very door (Mark 13:29). Thus, like the Jewish bride, we ready ourselves for the day we will hear the trumpet and the shout (I Thessalonians 4:16), before we are caught up to meet the Lord, not on earth, but in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17).

In the context of a Jewish wedding, John’s position as “friend of the bridegroom” (John 3:29) and his message of repentance in preparation for the coming Bridegroom (Matthew 3:3) becomes clear.

“Therein lies the problem,” you say. “If the marriage is to be validated on my purity, I deserve only divorce or stoning because I sin miserably; I mess up constantly; I fail continually.”

Good news! The validation of our relationship with our Bridegroom doesn’t depend on our sinlessness, but on His. The vesture dipped in His blood (Revelation 19:13) is that which allows us to be presented to Him without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27).

You mean we don’t have to clean up our act, do this, or do that? No, Jesus said blessed are those who are simply watching for His coming (Revelation 16:15). Blessed are those who realize the price has been paid and the work has been done.

Precious people, that’s what true Christianity is—just marveling at the love of the Father and of the Son for me and for you.

Thus, we are afforded a glorious honeymoon with Him, not for seven days, but for seven years as He serves us, His bride, in Heaven (Luke 12:37). At the end of seven years, we come back to earth with Him in the Second Coming (Revelation 19:14) where, at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, we are presented as His bride forever and ever.

And that is why we see the Marriage Feast in Revelation 19 rather than in chapter 4. The analogy is perfect.

Dear friend, if you have said, “Lord, I know I have sinned and failed, but I believe You love me and paid the price for me,” rejoice! Be glad! Celebrate! In the Lord’s sight, you are a six-cow woman, a beautiful, glorious bride.

So for seven years Jesus is going to serve us, in heaven. That my friend is your reward for be a faithful Bride, for enduring the hardships.