

2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

2 Thessalonians 2:1 "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him,"

“Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”: This is the fifth mention of Christ’s coming in the Thessalonian letters (1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23). The aspect of His coming in view here is identified by the next phrase “our gathering together,” which conveys the idea of all believers meeting together with the Lord Jesus. Obviously referring to the rapture of the church described (in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and John 14:1-3).

See (Hebrews 10:25), for the only other use of this phrase in the New Testament. This was the event the Thessalonians were anticipating (1 Thess. 1:10; 3:13; 5:9).

“Our gathering together” is a reference to the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17).

Paul, in this first verse, is recognizing the fact that these things are valid to believe. He is not telling them not to believe in these things. He is saying they might not be coming in just a few days. This was the stir in Thessalonica. They had decided that the second coming of Christ was to be immediately.

Paul says, I believe it too, but let us look clearer to when this shall take place. All Christians should believe in the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming for those who are looking for Him. Our "gathering together unto Him", is the same as the time when the trump of God blows in the sky, and we go to meet our Lord in the sky.

The silver trumpet of redemption (the trump of the gathering) will blow, and we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye to an incorruptible being.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."

“Shaken” (Greek saleuo), denotes great anxiety and pain. The Thessalonians were deeply troubled about this matter.

This term has been used of an earthquake (Acts 16:26), and a ship at anchor slipping its mooring in the midst of a heavy wind. Along with the word “disturbed,” it describes the state of agitation and alarm that had griped the church. They were greatly distressed because they had expected the Rapture, the gathering together to the Lord, to take place before the Day of the Lord.

They had expected to be taken to glory and heavenly rest, not left to persecution and divine wrath. Paul must have taught them that they would miss the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2-5; Rev. 3:10). But they had become confused by the persecution they were experiencing, thinking they may have been in the Day of the Lord.

This error had been reinforced by some messages to them claiming that they were indeed in the Day of the Lord. Paul noted the source of these as “spirit,” “message,” and letter.” A “spirit” would most likely refer to a false prophet claiming divine revelation as (in 1 John 4:1-3). A “message” would refer to a sermon or speech given, while a “letter” indicated a written report.

The powerful but harmful effect of this false information was gained by claiming it was from the Apostle Paul (“as if from us”). Whoever was telling them they were in the Day of the Lord, claimed that it came from Paul who heard it, preached it, and wrote it. Thus, their lie was given supposed apostolic sanction.

The result was shock, fear, and alarm. Obviously, they had expected the Rapture before the Day of the Lord. For if they had expected it after, they would have rejoiced because Christ’s coming was to be soon. Apostolic authenticity in this letter which corrects the error was important and accounts for Paul’s care to close the letter in his distinctive handwriting (3:7; Gal 6:11).

“As that the day of Christ is at hand” (literally “as though the day of Christ is present”): These people thought the day of the Lord had already begun.

The idea that the Day of the Lord had already come conflicted with what Paul had previously taught them about the Rapture. This error, which so upset the Thessalonians, is what Paul corrected (in verses 3-12). Where he showed that the day hadn’t come and couldn’t until certain realities were in place, most especially “the man of lawlessness” (verse 3).

This is the purpose of the letter. They had decided that His coming would be in the next few days or weeks, and they had been shaken in their spirit because of this. We do know that for each person there is no more than 100 years to wait. Because if they go the way of the grave, they die within 100 years.

This really is not speaking of that. This is the fact that they were expecting Him to come while they were alive, and were setting a time schedule on this. They were overly excited thinking the time was really soon. It is dangerous to set times.

Verses 3-4: “Falling away” (the apostasy): The Day of the Lord cannot occur until a deliberate abandonment of a formerly professed position, allegiance, or commitment occurs (the term was used to refer to military, political or religious rebellion). Some have suggested, on questionable linguistic evidence, that this refers to “departure” in the sense of the Rapture.

Context however, points to a religious defection, which is further described (in verse 4). The language indicates a specific event, not general apostasy which exists now and always will. Rather, Paul has in mind the apostasy. This is an event which is clearly and specifically identifiable and unique, the consummate act of rebellion, and event of final magnitude.

The key to identifying the event is to identify the main person, which Paul does, calling him the “man of lawlessness.” Some texts have “man of sin,” but there is no real difference in meaning since sin equals lawlessness (1 John 3:4). This is the one who is called “the prince who is to come” (Dan. 9:26), and “the little horn” (Dan. 7-8), who John calls “the beast” (Rev. 13:2-10, 18), and most known as the Antichrist.

The context and language clearly identify a real person in future times who actually does the things prophesied of him in Scripture. He is also called “the son of perdition” or destruction, a term used of Judas Iscariot (John 17:12). This “apostasy” is the abomination of desolation that takes place at the midpoint of the Tribulation, spoken of (in Dan. 9:27; 11:3 and Matt. 24:15).

This man is not Satan, although Satan is the force behind him (verse 9), and he has motives like the desires of the devil (14:13-14). Paul is referring to the very act of ultimate apostasy which reveals the final Antichrist and sets the course for the events that usher in the Day of the Lord.

Apparently, he will be seen as supportive of religion so that God and Christ will not appear as his enemies until the apostasy. He exalts himself and opposes God by moving into the temple, the place for worship of God, declaring himself to be God and demanding the worship of the world. In this act of satanic self-deification, he commits the great apostasy in defiance of God.

For the first 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation, he maintains relations with Israel, but halts those (Dan. 9:27); and for the last 3-1/2 years, there is a great tribulation under his reign (Dan. 7:25; 11:36-39; Matt. 24:15-21; Rev. 13:1-8), culminating with the Day of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

“Falling away” (Greek apostasia), is the great and final apostasy or repudiation of the Christian faith that will occur at the appearance of “the son of perdition (the Antichrist; 1 Tim. 5:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

“Man of sin”: (Some manuscripts read “man of lawlessness”): This is the beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1), the little horn (Dan. 7:8), and the false Christ who will aim to rule the world (Rev. 13:15-17). This is the Antichrist.

The word “apostasy” means “a standing away from” in the sense of a falling away, withdrawal, or defection from the truth. It may be the result of persecution (Matt. 24:9-10), false teachers (Matt. 24:11), temptation (Luke 8:13), worldliness (2 Tim 4:4), inadequate knowledge of Christ (1 John 2:19), moral lapse (Heb. 6:4-6), forsaking spiritual living and worship (Heb. 10:25-31), or unbelief (Heb. 3:12).

While there are those in every generation who fall away, this will be a general condition prior to the revelation of the Antichrist. In classical Greek, the word apostasy was used of a revolt staged by a military commander.

This "apostasy", spoken of here, as a falling away from the church was not evident then, but is certainly going on today in the church. Before the coming of the Lord, there will be a great falling away from the church. The son of perdition here, is speaking of the devil spirit in the antichrist. This is speaking of the man of perdition bringing sin in the church.

Judas Iscariot was spoken of as son of perdition. This does not mean that it is Judas. It means someone who has sold out to Satan. He is totally controlled by Satan. The reason people will listen to, and follow this man of sin, is that he will do wonders. The Bible says he will even be able to call down fire from heaven.

You may read about this in the 13th chapter of Revelation. I personally believe this man of sin has already begun his nasty work.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

"Sitteth in the temple of God" parallels the "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). When the Antichrist desecrates the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, he will usurp worship for himself.

If he is not for Christ, he is antichrist. This has been the old devil's trick ever since Lucifer was thrown out of heaven. He wanted to be greater than God. He always appeals to the ego of man. His trick with Eve was telling her the fruit of the tree would make her wise like God. He lied then, and he has lied to the antichrist as well. He uses people vulnerable to believe his lies.

The antichrist is not satisfied with being opposed to Christ, but actually wants to sit in the place of God in the temple. He appears as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:14 "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

There are several opinions of where he will be seated; some believe in the temple in Jerusalem, others believe that he will take his place as the authority in the church of the Christians. Paul many times spoke of the believers in Christ as the temple of God. We do know that a Moslem temple presently sits over the location of the temple in Jerusalem.

One, or all of these things perhaps, will happen. It really does not matter. Our job is to be so full of the Word of God that we will not be deceived into believing the antichrist. It is a dangerous thing to want to be God.

2 Thessalonians 2:5 " Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

“I told you”: The imperfect tense is used indicating repeated action in past time. Apparently, Paul on numerous occasions had taught them the details of God’s future plans. Here he reminded them of the issues which proved the false teachers wrong about the Day of the Lord.

Paul had before told them that the revealing of the Antichrist preceded the Day of the Lord; since he has not yet been revealed, they could not possibly be in that Day.

Paul is reminding them that he had preached about these very things, when he was with them. It is a wonderful thing to be looking for the soon coming of the Lord, but it is a bad thing to let it trouble you. Paul is saying, shame on you for not realizing that God will see you through whatever situation you find yourself in, if you will put your trust in Him.

Verses 6-7: “Ye know what withholdeth” literally means “restrains,” the same word translated “letteth” (in verse 7). The restrainer may be the Holy Spirit, who will restrain sin throughout the church age until “He be taken out of the way,” that is until His restraining influence is removed. This will occur at the Rapture of the church.

2 Thessalonians 2:6 "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time."

“Withholdeth”: While the Thessalonians already had been taught and thus knew what was restraining the coming of the Antichrist, Paul does not say specifically in this letter; thus, many suggestions have been made to identify the restraining force (of verses 6-7).

These include:

- (1) Human government;
- (2) Preaching of the gospel;
- (3) The binding of Satan;
- (4) The providence of God;
- (5) The Jewish state;
- (6) The church; (7) The Holy Spirit; and
- (8) Michael.

Whatever now restrains the Antichrist (of verses 3-4, 8-10), from being revealed in the fullness of his apostasy and evil, must be more than human or even angelic power. The power that holds back Satan from bringing the final apostasy and unveiling of his Satan-possessed false Christ must be divinely supernatural.

It must be God’s power in operation that holds back Satan, so that the man of sin, the son of destruction, won’t be able to come until God permits it by removing the restraining power. The

reason for the restraint was so that Antichrist would be revealed at God's appointed time and no sooner, just as was Christ (Gal. 4:4). Because God controls Satan.

God has a time schedule when all of these things will happen. The man of sin cannot appear and do these things, until the Lord gives him permission to go ahead. Satan cannot do anything without permission from God to do it. Satan is not in control, the Lord is. The antichrist will appear on the scene, when God gets ready for him to and not one minute earlier.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way."

"The mystery of iniquity": This is the spirit of lawlessness already prevalent in society (1 John 3:4; 5:17). But still a mystery in that it is not fully revealed as it will be in the one who so blatantly opposes God that he blasphemously assumes the place of God on earth which God has reserved for Jesus Christ.

The spirit of such a man is already in operation (1 John 2:18; 4:30), but the man who fully embodies that spirit has not come.

"Taken out of the way": This refers not to spatial removal (therefore it could not be the rapture of the church), but rather "a stepping aside." The idea is "out of the way," not gone (Col. 2:14), where our sins are taken out of the way as a barrier to God.

This restraint will be in place until the Antichrist is revealed, at the midpoint of the Tribulation, leaving him 42 months to reign (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:5).

We know this to be true, because we know that the spirit of the devil entered into Judas Iscariot, and he betrayed Jesus. There has always been a battle going on with good and evil ever since the Garden of Eden. Man has a free will. He can follow Jesus, or he can follow Satan.

The antichrist would not have to be the antichrist, if he would follow Jesus. The antichrist has chosen to be an instrument of Satan. The flesh of mankind has always been opposed to the spirit of mankind. The temptations of the flesh are what cause mankind to sin. The free will of mankind chooses to follow the flesh, or the spirit.

Mystery is many times veiled around evil. We know that even Babylon is called, mystery Babylon. It is definitely a mystery why anyone would follow evil instead of good. The only answer to that is they have fallen for a deception. All who oppose Christ are antichrist, but there is a person who personifies this in the end time, and he is the antichrist.

When the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide is removed, then the antichrist will bring lawlessness and sin like the world has never known. Even now this influence is working in the children of disobedience.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in this world to some extent restrains evil. Often this is accomplished through the presence of Christians who are the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). At the rapture, when the Christians are removed and the age of the Holy Spirit ceases, this restraining ministry will be “taken out of the way” during the Tribulation. Until that time, God will use the godly examples of Christians to restrain evil in the world.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed” (literally). “Then shall that lawless one be revealed”: Paul argues that the day of the Lord simply does not begin until the restraint by the Holy Spirit is removed, and the Antichrist is revealed. Since none of this had occurred, the day of the Lord had not yet come.

At the divinely decreed moment in the middle of the Tribulation when God removes the divine restraint, Satan, who has been promoting the spirit of lawlessness (verse 7), is finally allowed to fulfill his desire to imitate God by indwelling a man who will perform his will as Jesus did God’s. This also fits God’s plan for the consummation of evil and the judgment of the Day of the Lord.

“The Lord shall consume”: Death occurs at God’s hand (Dan. 7:26; Rev. 17:11), and this man and his partner, the false prophet, will be cast alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone, where he will be eternally separated from God. (Rev. 1:20; 20:10).

“His coming”: The aspect of His coming in view here is not the rapture of the church, but the Lord’s coming in judgment on that day when He conquers the forces of Satan and sets up his millennial kingdom (Rev. 19: 11-21).

The workings of the evil one are in the world even now, but the teaching by the Holy Spirit of God is keeping him from having the influence he would over the people. When that wicked day comes, the antichrist will have great power. He will no longer be working in secret and in a subtle way.

"The Spirit of the Lord's mouth" is the Word of God. Truth does away with deception. The Word of God is Truth. His brightness is above all other brightness in the world. He is the source of all Light. His Light completely destroys darkness in the world.

Darkness cannot remain where the Light is. This Light reveals all. We have spoken over and over how evil is the darkness of this world. We also know that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. When these two meet, Jesus' Light does away with all darkness.

2 Thessalonians Chapter 2 Questions

1. What is Paul recognizing in verse 1?
2. What was the stir in Thessalonica?
3. What is meant by "gathering together unto Him"?
4. What is the trump of gathering?
5. What will the Christians who are alive be turned into at His coming?
6. Be not soon shaken in _____, or be _____, neither by _____, nor by _____, nor by _____ as from us.
7. What is the purpose of this letter?
8. That day shall not come, except there be a _____ away first.
9. What is this "apostasy"?
10. Who is the son of perdition?
11. Where does this son of perdition bring the sin?
12. Who was spoken of as son of perdition in one instance in the New Testament?
13. Why will people listen to this man?
14. What is one specific miracle he will do?
15. How high does this man of sin exalt himself?
16. Those who are not for Christ are _____.
17. The devil always appeals to the _____ of man.
18. Where do we find the Scripture that says, Satan is transformed into an angel of light?
19. What can we do to not be deceived by the antichrist?
20. What did Paul remind them of in verse 5?
21. Why can the man of sin not appear, when he wants to?
22. The _____ of man has always been opposed to the _____ of man.

23. What causes man to sin?
24. We know that Babylon is called _____ Babylon.
25. What is the restraining influence?
26. What will happen when He is removed?
27. How shall the Lord consume that wicked one?
28. What is "the Spirit of the Lord's mouth"?
29. Who is the source of all Light?
30. Light does away with all _____.