

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Week 5 – Concerning the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Gathering Together to Him; The Results of the Rapture

February 21, 2017

### II Thessalonians 2:1-17

*Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup> And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, <sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. <sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, <sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.*

*<sup>16</sup> 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, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

*Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, Paul is writing to believers about the rapture.*

*The mystery of lawlessness: mystery – a truth that had been hidden from all ages in the past but now revealed in the NT; lawlessness – contempt and violation of the law; the mystery of lawlessness - the future climax of lawlessness in the world.*

*Lawlessness has been restrained UNTIL.... And this restraining will continue until the time appointed by God for revealing the man of sin, the antichrist, and the climax of lawlessness.*

*The spirit of such a man is already in operation (I John 2:18; 4:3); however, the man who fully embodies that spirit has not yet come.*

Paul, in writing I and II Thessalonians, was correcting a wrong understanding (false teaching) of prophetic events. Paul is inspired by the Holy Spirit to focus on future events, prophetic events, as the church's HOPE!

II Thess. 2:1-2 - *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit (from a false prophet claiming divine revelation as in I Jn. 4:1-3) or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come*

Paul is writing to *brethren* – believers.

This is the fifth mention of Christ's coming in the Thessalonian letters (I Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23, and II Thess. 2:1).

*our gathering together to Him* conveys the truth of all NT believers (since Pentecost) meeting together with the Lord Jesus – believers coming TO Jesus – in the air – at the rapture as already taught in I Thess. 4:16-18 - *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

This is the event the Thessalonians were anticipating. Paul, in I Thess. 1:10, recognized that they had been waiting *for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come; I Thess. 5:9 – God did not appoint us to wrath....*

*not to be soon shaken...as though the day of Christ had come*

The “day of Christ” is better translated “day of the Lord.”

The day of the Lord in Scripture always refers to near judgment (note: Joel) or future judgment. The day of the Lord is not a 24-hour period of time. It is an extended period of time some teach includes the 7-year Tribulation, the return of Jesus to put down all rebellion against Him, the Millennial reign of Jesus on earth, the final defeat of Satan, and the Great White Throne of Judgment (Rev. 20).

How do we know if a specific passage is speaking of near or future judgment? CONTEXT! In I Thess. 4:15-18 – since Paul is indicating that the rapture could occur in his lifetime, the timeframe speaks to imminency!

*Shaken* is the term that has been used in the Gk for an earthquake (Acts 16:26). *Troubled* speaks to agitation. The Thessalonians were greatly distressed as they had expected the rapture, the *gathering together to Him*, to take place before the judgment/Day of the Lord. They had not anticipated being left on earth to be persecuted. Paul had already taught them about the departure/being caught up in I Thess. 4:15-18 – in the rapture and not coming under God's wrath (I Thess. 5:9)!

*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, The Thessalonians had been led astray by false teaching that the day of the Lord had already come. In this second letter, Paul clarifies his teaching in the first letter that the imminent departure is true!*

The judgment of God will not come until *the falling away* comes first. The Gk for *falling away* is *apostasia* – a defection, a falling away, a departure. The Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon which is considered the mother of all Greek lexicons/dictionaries lists the word as *disappearance*. This departure, in terms of a disappearance, had already been discussed between Paul and the Thessalonian believers (I Thess. 4:13-18).

There are Bible scholars who teach that this “falling away” - *apostasia* - is a departure from the faith. CONSIDER: Paul tells the Thessalonians that the “falling away” is yet in the future. If Paul is referring to the “falling away” equating to a departure from the faith...that was already ongoing within the Church in the first century. There were already false teachers in their midst. The NT teaches that apostasy had already arrived in the first century. Take note of the book of Jude specifically.

Paul, however, spoke of a physical departure – a catching up (*harpazo*) – in I Thess. 4:17. Paul uses a definite article with the word *apostasia*. He is pointing to a particular departure about which he’s already written – a catching up to meet the Lord in the air. Additionally, the definite article points to a previous reference: *Our gathering together to Him* – to meet the Lord in the air – the rapture! Paul is teaching these believers – and us – you know you’re not in the Tribulation because the disappearance has not yet occurred!

AND, the question that begs to be asked is how would the Thessalonians be comforted (v. 17) knowing that a defection from the faith must occur before the Day of the Lord/judgment. ! How is judgment a comfort?

The Thessalonians were sorrowful at the outset, thinking that their loved ones who have died were missing out on the Lord’s return. CONSIDER: if the Thessalonian believers had believed that the Church would be going through the Tribulation, they would have rejoiced that their loved ones had died.

II Thess. 2:5 - *Do you know remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

Paul had not discussed a departure from the faith with the Thessalonians in his first epistle to them. He talked to them about a healthy growing church, the shepherding of pastors, gospel proclamations and church planting AND the rapture and the Second Coming. Read I Thess. 5.

CONSIDER ALSO: if II Thess. 2 is defining the “falling away” as a departure from the faith, then imminency (the any moment coming of Jesus at the rapture) is not a Biblical truth because if Paul, in his writing to the Thessalonians, was intending for them to understand the “falling away” as a departure from the faith, Paul would’ve then been teaching the Thessalonians, and us, to look for a great departure from the faith/apostasy rather than Christ. (i.e. a departure from the faith would need to come first and then the Day of the Lord – the day of judgment, eschatologically, would occur)

II Thess. 2:3-4

*for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup> 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.

Following the rapture (not told of a timeframe) *the man of sin/the son of perdition/the lawless one* (v. 8) will be revealed. *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan* (v. 9) who exalts himself above God and sits in the temple demanding worship showing himself to be God (v. 4). This is the antichrist. He will be the embodiment of sin and lawlessness. Satan works through the antichrist. Consider: by possessing and controlling the antichrist, Satan is worshipped in the temple where God is to be worshipped. This was Satan's desire as Lucifer (Eze. 28:11-19).

### Contrasts between Christ and Antichrist

Christ	Antichrist
called the Christ (Mat. <a href="#">16:16</a> )	called the Antichrist (1Jn. <a href="#">4:3</a> )
the Man of Sorrows (Isa. <a href="#">53:3</a> )	the Man of Sin (2Th. <a href="#">2:3</a> )
the Son of God (John <a href="#">1:34</a> )	the Son of Perdition (2Th. <a href="#">2:3</a> )
the Seed of woman (Gen. <a href="#">3:15</a> )	the seed of the Serpent (Gen. <a href="#">3:15</a> )
the Lamb (Isa. <a href="#">53:7</a> )	the Beast (Rev. <a href="#">11:7+</a> )
the Holy One (Mark <a href="#">1:24</a> )	the Wicked One (2Th. <a href="#">2:8</a> )
the Truth (John <a href="#">14:6</a> )	the Lie (John <a href="#">8:44</a> )
Prince of Peace (Isa. <a href="#">9:6</a> )	profane Prince (Eze. <a href="#">21:25</a> )
glorious Branch (Isa. <a href="#">4:2</a> )	abominable Branch (Isa. <a href="#">14:19</a> )
the Mighty Angel (Rev. <a href="#">10:1+</a> )	the Angel of the Bottomless Pit (Rev. <a href="#">9:11+</a> )
the Good Shepherd (John <a href="#">10:11</a> )	the Idol Shepherd (Zec. <a href="#">11:17</a> )
the number of His name (the <a href="#">gematria</a> of "Jesus" in the Greek) 888	the number of his name 666 (Rev. <a href="#">13:18+</a> )
came down from heaven (John <a href="#">3:13</a> )	comes up out of the bottomless pit (Rev. <a href="#">11:7+</a> )
came in Another's Name (John <a href="#">5:43</a> )	comes in his own name (John <a href="#">5:43</a> )
came to do the Father's will (John <a href="#">6:38</a> )	will do his own will (Dan. <a href="#">11:36+</a> )
energized by the Holy Spirit (Luke <a href="#">4:14</a> )	energized by Satan (Rev. <a href="#">13:4+</a> )
submitted Himself to God (John <a href="#">5:30</a> )	defies God (2Th. <a href="#">2:4</a> )
humbled Himself (Php. <a href="#">2:8</a> )	exalts himself (Dan. <a href="#">11:37+</a> )

honored the God of His fathers (Luke <a href="#">4:16</a> )	refuses to (Dan. <a href="#">11:37+</a> )
cleansed the temple (John <a href="#">2:14, 16</a> )	defiles the temple (Mat. <a href="#">24:15</a> )
ministered to the needy (Isa. <a href="#">53:7</a> )	robs the poor (Ps. <a href="#">10:8, 9</a> )
rejected of men (Isa. <a href="#">53:7</a> )	accepted by men (Rev. <a href="#">13:4+</a> )
leads the flock (John <a href="#">10:3</a> )	leaves the flock (Zec. <a href="#">11:17</a> )
slain for the people (John <a href="#">11:51</a> )	slays the people (Isa. <a href="#">14:20</a> )
glorified God on earth (John <a href="#">17:4</a> )	blasphemes the name of God in heaven (Rev. <a href="#">13:6+</a> )
received up into heaven (Luke <a href="#">24:51</a> )	goes down into the Lake of Fire (Rev. <a href="#">19:20+</a> )

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II Thess. 2:6-7 - *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. <sup>7</sup> 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*

Lawlessness is indeed already at work - I John 4:3 - *and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

The restrainer has been restraining even in the midst of lawlessness playing out in the world. The lawless one will not be revealed until the restrainer is taken out of the way.

Who restrains? Some believe that the restrainer is Rome. However, the Roman Empire fell from power in the fifth century A.D., and the antichrist is yet to be revealed. AND, Scripture reveals that the antichrist will rule over a revived Roman Empire (Dan. 7:24). If that revived Roman Empire is promoting false religion, how would that restrain the coming of the antichrist? The Roman Empire in the past and the revived version in the future would have promoted the spirit of antichrist and the antichrist himself.

Some believe that the restrainer is human government. The idea is that lawlessness is restrained by the enforcement of law by the government. HOWEVER, the antichrist will be empowered by Satan (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:2 – *the dragon* [Rev. 12:9 – the dragon is Satan] *gave him his power*), THEREFORE, the restrainer must be powerful enough to stand against Satan. No human being or human government has that power.

The Restrainer must be the omnipotent God! The Restrainer must be the Holy Spirit Who indwells believers in Jesus!

I John 4:4 – *He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

*He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.* The Holy Spirit restrains the one who is the antichrist from being revealed.

Before the universal flood, when wickedness was great and growing, God warned mankind. We read in Gen. 6:3 - ...*My Spirit will not always strive with man.* The word “strive” means to judge in the sense of striving to restrain men from their evil ways.

When the rapture occurs, the Church, permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:3; 2:5; Acts 1:5; I Cor. 3:16; I Cor. 12:13) will be caught up to be with Jesus in the air. This means that when the Church is caught up to meet Jesus in the air and taken to heaven, the Holy Spirit will be *taken out of the way*. We can then say that the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way in terms of His restraint on the world. This taking out of the way of the Holy Spirit’s restraint allows the antichrist, energized by Satan, to come into power during the Tribulation period.

BUT, don’t think *taken out of the way* means GONE!

Will the Holy Spirit remain active on earth during the Tribulation? YES! While the Tribulation is an unparalleled time of judgment, it is also an unparalleled time of evangelism and people coming to faith in Jesus (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 6:9-11; Rev. 7:9-14). The Holy Spirit regenerates. Regeneration means imparting life. The Holy Spirit imparts life in salvation.

CONSIDER: The Spirit of God is God! He possesses all the attributes of God the Father and of God the Son. Since God the Father and God the Son are omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, the Holy Spirit is also all-knowing, everywhere present, and all-powerful – ALWAYS!

Following the rapture of the Church, the Holy Spirit will continue His work in bringing people to salvation as He did prior to Jesus’ death and resurrection...as He did in OT times.

No man ever came into the family of God apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. (Gen. 15:6; John 3:3ff)

We need to know what Christ said to the disciples before Pentecost. He was speaking of the Holy Spirit – the *Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you* (John 14:17).

*Dwells with you* is a reference to the relationship of the Holy Spirit to men before He came to take up His residence within all believers on the day of Pentecost.

The phrase *and shall be in you* is the post-Pentecost experience. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to indwell every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

In John 14:17 Jesus was speaking of a special relationship which was enjoyed by the disciples with the Holy Spirit. That relationship was enjoyed by other individuals throughout the OT.

The first reference we find to this indwelling of the Holy Spirit is in Gen. 41:38. Pharaoh spoke of Joseph: *And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”*

We read that Nebuchadnezzar testified of Daniel that *in him is the Spirit of the Holy God* (Dan. 5:10-11).

When Daniel came before King Belshazzar, it was said of Daniel, *There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.* (Dan. 5:13).

Men in the OT did have the privilege of an experience with the Holy Spirit. He dwelled with them; He came upon them; He was said, per Scripture (Gen. 41:38; Dan. 5) to dwell in some (Joseph and Daniel).

The Holy Spirit empowered people during OT times:

- In Exodus we read about men who were given the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to enable them to work as skilled craftsmen in erecting and building the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 28:3; Ex. 31:3-5).
- Judges 6:34 - . . . *the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon*; Gideon was one of the Judges. He led men to fight against the Midianites in the Promised Land.
- Of King David we read, *Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah* (I Sam. 16:13).
  - Of no other individual in the OT is it said that the Spirit of God came upon them “from this day forward.”
    - Psa. 51:11 - *...do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

The Holy Spirit will empower His witnesses during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:14; Matt. 13:11 [Olivet Discourse]) - *But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.*

During the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit will no longer baptize believers into the body of Christ which is the Church as the Church will be in the presence of God in heaven.

The Holy Spirit will not be working through the Church during the Tribulation. The Church, as God’s redemptive tool on earth, will have completed its task and will be raptured. Evangelism, however, will be more effective than it has ever been (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9-14). Countless multitudes will come to faith in Jesus through the Holy Spirit during the Tribulation.

The Holy Spirit will NOT actively hinder Satan from bringing His schemes to fruition. AND YET, all will be fulfilled according to God’s plan!

### QUESTIONS

Has the rapture been further clarified for you? How?

What is your view of the restrainer?

What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost?

What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost up until the rapture?

So what? How is this important?

HOMEWORK

Reread the handout for week 4 and look up the Bible references.

Write down your questions regarding Revelation – give or Email to your Table Leader.

Read Psa. 83.

Read Eze. 38 & 39.

## WEEK 5 – APPENDIX

II Thess. 2:1-4

*Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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 uses a definite article with the word *apostasia*. The handout dated 2/21/17 speaks of *apostasia* as addressing a departure as in a removal, as in the rapture. There is another view that is not included in the 2/21/17 handout. Thus, this Appendix.

Those who view *apostasia* as a departure from the faith, explain this “falling away” in II Thess. 2:3 as the ultimate apostasy/departure from the faith – a defection, a rebellion against the faith, a revolt. Scripture speaks of apostasy in terms of departing from the faith occurring in the first century. However, since this future “falling away” in II Thess. 2:3 has the definite article “the,” the ultimate apostasy appears to be the subject. It will be ultimate in the sense that it will be a total, worldwide falling away from God in contrast with past limited apostasies.

When the rapture of the Church takes place, every saved person will be removed from the earth. As a result, instantly the entire world will be apostate because the earth will be filled exclusively with unsaved people. Thus, the “falling away” will be the result of the rapture of the Church.