

2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

Opening Remarks

Welcome back to our 2 Thessalonians series! We have a special double-feature tonight – I will teach Chapter 2 and Dr. Scott will end this semester of Monday Night Raw with Chapter 3, so we will stay a little longer than normal. As always, it has been a pleasure to study God's Word with you for the past eight weeks. All my sources will be in the notes including three books regarding Biblical Interpretation which may be useful to you. I will highlight the primary sources which you may need to further study the Thessalonian Letters and accompanying Revelation Scriptures.

Tonight, we will read in Chapter 2 about the man of lawlessness, also known in Scripture as the antichrist. We will also receive a reminder about living holy lives according to the ways of the Lord.

Let's pray and dive right in!

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

The Man of Lawlessness

2 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him: We ask you, brothers and sisters, ² not to be easily upset or troubled, either by a prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God.

⁵ Don't you remember that when I was still with you I used to tell you about this? ⁶ And you know what currently restrains him, so that he will be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but the one now restraining will do so until he is out of the way, ⁸ and then the lawless one will be revealed. The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and will bring him to nothing at the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is based on Satan's working, with every kind of miracle, both signs and wonders serving the lie, ¹⁰ and with every wicked deception among those who are perishing. They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a strong delusion so that they will believe the lie, ¹² so that all will be condemned—those who did not believe the truth but delighted in unrighteousness.

In the previous chapter, Paul encouraged the Thessalonians by reminding them to walk worthy of their calling in the Lord Jesus. Here in Chapter 2, he warns them to not just accept anyone's doctrine, especially from those who were falsely claiming that the Day of the Lord had already taken place. Then he begins a discussion regarding the antichrist, known here in 2 Thessalonians as the "man of lawlessness." Since we have the entire Canon of God's Word, we will take a broader look at this man of lawlessness this evening.

The antichrist (see **slide 1**):

- He will apparently rise from European roots, likely Rome (**Daniel 7:7-8, 8:8-12, Daniel 9:26; Revelation 13:1, Revelation 17:10**).

We believe that both Daniel and Jesus (through John in the Revelation) confirm this truth. When we see "the sea" in Scripture, it is usually referring to the Mediterranean Sea.

Sometimes the "sea" is also figuratively indicative of a group of people in Scripture; thus, the antichrist will come from a group of people in the Mediterranean – likely Rome when compared to the Scriptures in Daniel.

- He will come to power through diplomacy. We know this from **Daniel 8:25**, which notes that he will use "deceit," and from **Revelation 6:2**, which notes that the rider of the white horse of the Seal Judgments will have a bow – but no arrow, which indicates

that he will conquer through diplomacy rather than force. It's a great reminder to us that just because someone is a great orator and *seems* to be telling the truth does not mean that they are. We must be a discerning people of the Lord!

- He will sign a covenant with Israel (**Daniel 9:27; Isaiah 28:18**), apparently following the first war of Gog and Magog that is depicted in **Ezekiel 38-39**. Since I am a Pre-Tribulation guy, I believe this war will take place either right before or immediately following the Rapture, and that this evil covenant will enter the Israelites and the remaining people on Earth into the Tribulation Period. It is my belief that the antichrist will realize he cannot defeat God at that time – or that he will simply ascertain it is not prudent to take on Israel after the Nation has just been saved by God – and will sign the covenant on behalf of the Roman region.
- He will establish a one world government (**Revelation 17:12-15**). This government will be far more than socialist – it will be communism on steroids. One government, one faith, one monetary system, one everything – all based on the most narcissistic of all narcissists in existence. Your garden variety narcissist exhibits certain signs: 1) Lying; 2) Manipulating; 3) Spreading false rumors; 4) Using deceptive charm; 5) Playing the victim; 6) Projecting what they are doing onto others, and the antichrist will take these horrible traits to a new level, maximize them through the

scheming of Satan himself, and will change the world around him to the worst version of itself. It will be a false time of peace, according to the Scriptures, followed by war, famine, and significant death known as the Seal Judgments (see **Revelation 6**).

- He will appoint ten kings or leaders over ten regions or countries (**Daniel 2, Daniel 7:24-25; Revelation 17:12-15**). These leaders will help him in his evil ways, especially beginning in the second half of the Tribulation. Three of the kings will eventually turn against the antichrist but he will “subdue” them. He will have world power for a time.
- He will allow the Israelites to begin a new Temple during the first half of the Tribulation Period, perhaps to gain their confidence before he turns on them in the second half (**Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 11:1**). This great deceiver will break his covenant halfway through the Tribulation Period, place himself on the throne of the Temple, and be killed and miraculously revived (**Revelation 13:3**).
- The antichrist will eventually use the false prophet, his evil sidekick, to force people into taking a permanent mark. Many of those who refuse to take the mark will be executed. He and the false prophet will ultimately war against Christ Himself at the end of the Tribulation – the Lord will speak, and the antichrist will be conquered once and for all time.

The contrast between Jesus and the antichrist could not be more opposite (see slide 2): Jesus came to save, not to condemn (**John 3:17**), but the enemy, Satan, will use the antichrist to lead many to eternal condemnation. The antichrist will have some temporary success too, according to **2 Thessalonians 2**, because the people will choose to listen to the enemy rather than to God. However, he will not be able to lead all people to the enemy because the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit, does not allow him to, then or now. God will save those who turn to Him for salvation, always and forever (**2 Peter 3:9**). Those who refuse Him will condemn themselves to life away from Him (**Revelation 20**), but those who choose Jesus choose life, and life to the full (**John 10:10**).

Just as a side note, those who are Post-Tribulation believers (or people who believe all Christians living at that time will go through the entire Tribulation), may point to this section 2 Thessalonians 2 and say, “See, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is preparing us for the Tribulation.” It is a compelling point. However, I would counter that the Bible, the best-selling Book in all of history, will be extensively read during the Tribulation Period because of the millions of people who will be saved due to God’s grace and due to the 144,000 Jewish witnesses who lead them. Perhaps, then, 2 Thessalonians and the other Scriptures which warn us about the antichrist are primary for them in *that* time. In either

case, the Holy Spirit is preparing us for the *spirit* of the antichrist which will be prevalent until the time of the Millennial Kingdom. This evil spirit will attempt to convince people that Jesus is not the Messiah, thus John said in his first Letter that the Church should be aware of which spirits we follow (**1 John 4:1-6**). We *must* follow Jesus and hear the voice of the Spirit, as Jesus's Word repeatedly tells us to do!

Before we move to the last section of 2 Thessalonians, let's review the timeline of the antichrist and the Tribulation Period (**see slide 3**).

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Stand Firm

¹³ But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught, whether by what we said or what we wrote.

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by

grace, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word.

Paul, at the end of this chapter, reminds his brothers and sisters in the Lord that they are to walk *through the Spirit* lives of holy sanctification. He reminds them to walk in the traditions (or doctrines) of what they were taught through the instructions from he and his fellow apostles.

In this final section, we should note that Paul specifically mentions the entire Godhead: The Spirit (**verse 13**), and The Son and The Father (**verse 16**). This beautiful reminder is that we serve a God who loves us and who has called us to live holy lives through His might, not our own. We are to stand firm in our faith because we are Spirit-filled, doctrinally-sound, sanctified believers and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ!

As I close tonight, I would love to remind you of a few verses from the end of John's Gospel:

John 21:24-25

Epilogue

²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written.

Although we spoke much about the antichrist tonight and about being sanctified believers by and through the Holy Spirit, we cannot forget our mission. My prayer for us is that we will all remember that we were bought with a price by the Son Jesus Christ, and that we will live faithful lives – believing the truth that the world cannot contain all that is in Him.

God bless you. I love you.

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