

2nd Thessalonians Ch 2 Vs 1-17

“Concerning Christ’s Coming”

An older couple had trouble remembering common, day-to-day things. So they both decided that they would write down requests the other had, so as to try and avoid forgetting. One evening the wife asked if the husband would like anything. He replied, “Yes. I’d like a large ice-cream sundae with chocolate ice cream, whipped cream and a cherry on top.” The wife started off for the kitchen and the husband shouted after her, “Aren’t you going to write it down?” “Don’t be silly,” she hollered back, “I’m going to fix it right now. I won’t forget.” She was gone for quite some time. When she finally returned, she set down in front of him a large plate of hashbrowns, eggs, bacon, and a glass of orange juice. He took one look and said, “I knew you should have written it down! You forgot the toast!”

If you’re anything like me you can relate to this story and you don’t have to be “older” because we seem to be so easily prone to forget things. and As we approach ch 2 we’re getting into the heart of this epistle, the primary reason that Paul wrote it, to comfort them concerning the coming of Christ. But in reality he’s told them at least twice before that I’m aware of, once while he was with them there in Thessalonica preaching and teaching them the Word of God, and then again when he wrote to them the 1st time. and Now here they are all shaken up, and troubled concerning Christ’s coming. and In essence he’s saying, concerning Christ’s coming, *calm down!* Why, because they were all in a frantic panic because they thought they were going through the great tribulation, because as we pointed out in our last study (trusting that you haven’t forgotten) the Thessalonian church was a heavily persecuted church. and When you mix that with some wolves in sheep’s clothing spreading the lie that the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacobs trouble was upon them backed with some apparently forged letter that Paul had written being circulated stating that “fact”, it’s possible to see how they could be easily persuaded and forget everything they’d been taught. Not being able to see the forest of afflictions that we as believers have been appointed to for the tree of persecution in front of their faces.

But I find that we’re really not all that different, how often we find ourselves in the midst of a certain scenario or situation and suddenly we forget everything we’ve been taught regarding the nature of God. Something tragic happens, or we’re faced with uncertainty, or confusion, and we immediately turn off the voice of the Holy Spirit that says, “Hey, lets reason this through and consider My Word” and we hit the panic button and begin to question the love of God, or His ability to guide us or see us through a situation. We forget vs like, Jer 29:11, “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*” We get offended at the way another brother or sister treats us and we think, “that’s it, that’s the last straw, the next chance I get, I’m going to hang them out to dry, I’m going to do unto them just like they’ve done unto me.”

We forget vs like, *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”* Col 3:12-13 We let our emotions take over don’t we? and Send us into hyper drive, we forget the mindset of God, and how He’s for us and not against us, and that’s exactly what’s happened here. That’s why Peter said, *“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you.”* 2 Peter 1:12-13 and These believers had forgotten for a moment the heartbeat of God towards His children, how, *“God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.”* 1 Thess 5:9-10

So now that Paul has commended them for their faith and love, realizing that their hope has been stolen, and he’s reminded them of the end of those unrighteous persecutors of theirs, he gets now to the primary purpose of his writing to stir them again by way of remembrance.

Vs1-5

Paul says, *“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.”* Referring to what, the rapture of the church, this is something that he’s already dealt with them on, and instructed them in on a # of occasions. We read in 1 Thess 4:16-17 where he wrote *“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. 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.”* and This is what he’s talking about here, “now, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” in regards to Him descending from heaven to meet us personally in the clouds, “and our gathering together to Him” in reference to the rapture itself, that moment that we’re caught up, and snatched away violently to meet Him in the air. and Paul told them there in the 1st epistle that that reality, the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ to receive us to Himself was to be a great comfort to them. You know, things go wrong, tragic things happen; we’re given over at various times for various seasons of our lives to affliction, but take heart, Jesus is coming soon. and He’s going to rescue us from the heartaches, and heartbreaks, the trials and tribulations of this world and wipe away every tear, and there will be no more sorrow and no more pain, for the former things will have passed away. Therefore (Paul would say) comfort one another with these words.

But at this time the Thessalonian believers were anything but comforted, they were confused, and in turmoil, they were upset, they were distressed and disturbed, saddened and shaken, and so Paul says here, “we ask you”.

Vs2

In other words don't lose focus, don't get distracted from the truth, because God's not the author of confusion, but of peace. What does the bible say? "*You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.*" Isa 26:3 But the moment we cease trusting in the Lord we lose our focus upon the Lord, and our peace begins to evaporate. Peter steps out of the boat onto the boisterous seas and he's walking towards the Lord, but suddenly he realizes that he's in an impossible situation, begins to waiver in his trust in the Lord's ability to keep him, begins to focus now no longer on the Lord, but upon his circumstance, and it takes him under.

The lesson is clear, with out Christ we can do nothing, but I can do all things through Christ as He strengthens me, as I'm focused upon Him and trusting in Him, and being obedient to Him. Remember that the Lord called Peter out, that wasn't "blind faith" he was responding the Lord's direction for life, and then failed to trust the Lord to keep him in the midst of it. Now here Paul says don't be shaken or troubled, which means what? They were shaken and troubled, that word "shaken" implies a sudden jolt, and then the word "troubled" speaks of the on going ripple effect. In other words the shocking news comes, and it's bad news, "We're in the Day of the Lord" (if you have a KJV or a NKJV they actually didn't translate this correct, the word is "Kurios" which is accurately translated "Lord"). So he's talking here about the Day of the Lord as found in Joel ch 2 which correlates to Rev ch 6 vs 12 and following. That time that the bible refers to as the time of Jacobs trouble, Jesus called it the Great Tribulation, Paul says don't be shaken in mind regarding that fact or allow it to trouble you any further, and it doesn't matter if the word came to you by spirit, a "Thus says the Lord" or by letter as if we wrote it.

We're to test the spirits and hold fast to that which is good, don't believe every word out of a persons mouth just because it's packaged up nice and neat in a "Thus says the Lord" make sure it lines in with the whole counsel of the Word of God, and if it doesn't reject it. and If it's something that strikes fear into your heart (not that there's not legitimate warnings and exhortations) but if it causes fear to grip your heart, odds are it's not the Lord. Why, because, "*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*" 2 Tim 1:7 and So if God hasn't given us a spirit of fear why would He seek to motivate us by the means of fear? We read in 1 John 4:18 "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment.*" and God's just not into tormenting His children, God is love, so you see we're to measure the things that come into our lives whether by word or whatever up against the Word of God. and Jesus said, "*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" John 14:27 and By the way, in this text lies another great reason for holding the pre-tribulation rapture position, which is the biblical and correct position ;0) because these people wouldn't be troubled about being in the Tribulation if they were supposed to experience it anyway.

In one respect they would welcome it because it would mean that Jesus' coming was right around the corner because the coming of Christ to establish His earthly Kingdom directly follows the Great Tribulation. But their understanding was that as Paul had taught them, they weren't appointed to Wrath, but to obtain salvation, so why then are we in the Tribulation, that thought would trouble me to.

Vs3-7

Now the reason I read that whole portion is because I want to develop with you as Paul explains here the reasons that we know that we're not in the Great Tribulation, nor will we ever be. 3 Reasons for those of you who take notes and we'll develop them as we get to them but #1 in vs 3 "The falling away comes first" #2 "The man of sin is revealed" and #3 in vs 7 "He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way." So Paul is saying that there has to be a falling away, the man of sin will have to be revealed, and besides all that there's still a restraining force in the world that's keeping the Anti-Christ from being revealed.

#1 The falling away comes 1st, now there are a couple of different ways you can see this, both of which I believe are equally valid and both will happen, because there are very scholarly men on both sides of the coin here and find that generally when there's 2 possible understandings that often times both apply. First of all many believe this to mean a falling away from the faith, apostasy will take place. Now what is apostasy, it's turning your back on the truth, and in many ways I believe that the church is already in the midst of this one. As many sects of the church are now marrying homosexual couples and ordaining homosexual and lesbian priest in face of the clear teaching of God's Word. Sodomy, molestation, and various scams to prosper themselves in the name of Jesus, I mean it seems evident to me that we're there though even now there's a remnant that's holding true to the Word of God. But, when that remnant is removed (vs1) then the church will fall into a total state of apostasy called in the book of Rev ch 17 and ch 19 "The great harlot". So there are those who say this falling away alludes to the apostate condition of the church, and surely we read in 1 Tim 4:1-3 "*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*" Turn with me to 2 Tim 3:1-5 (read), look at ch 4 vs3-4. Sounds a lot like what we see today doesn't it, so this is a definite application of what we're reading regarding the falling away.

But the word apostasy in it's simplest form simply means "a departure." and So other Greek scholars argue that this is another inference to the Rapture saying that it's speaking of the church's departure from the planet before the man of sin is revealed, and there's plenty of biblical ground to argue that as well, and so personally I think both apply. Whether Paul had in mind a departure from the truth of the word of God, or a departure of the church from the planet, both hold true biblically speaking before #2 takes place which is "the man of sin is revealed."

Also called the son of perdition, John refers to him as the Anti-Christ and the beast, Jesus referred to him as the one who would come in his own name in John 5:43 and Daniel referred to him in a # of ways one of which is the king who will do according to his own will. Dan 11:36- says, *“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”* But the Day of the Lord can’t be upon the world until this man is brought forth into the forefront of the political scene by which he becomes a dictator of the planet. and Since we don’t currently have a one-world government, (though things are rapidly moving that direction) and we don’t have one man over all the nations of the earth, we can’t be in that time. Now how is he revealed, by that fact of him being the one who is over all the earth, the man whose elected “President” or whatever they’ll call him over the one world government, he’s this man. and You can read Rev 17 for commentary on that as well as Dan ch 7 vs 19 through about 25. and As you know this man will be a very evil man who ultimately will be Satanically possessed and responsible for all kinds of atrocities and persecution of the Saints, because Satan wants to be like God, and wants to be worshipped as God. and 3 ½ yrs into the tribulation we find that he (in the body of the Anti-Christ) will go into the temple that will be built in Jerusalem (of which they’re already training the priesthood and have fashioned the instruments used in the temple service) and he will penetrate the holy of holies and proclaim himself there to be God and demand that he be worshipped as God. Notice vs 4

Vs4

and This is what Jesus referred to as the Abomination of Desolation as did Daniel in Dan 12:11 where we read, *“And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.”* What’s the abomination of desolation that’s set up? It’s the A.C. setting himself up in the holy of holies professing to be God which is an abomination, and it will cause the Jews to flee because of the persecution that’s coming (Jesus saying tribulation such as has never been seen since the beginning meaning more than WW 2 or any other time of persecution in history.) and They’ll realize that they’ve been deceived and they’ll leave it desolate, they’ll flee, now when will this happen? According to Daniel it will be 3 ½ yrs into the Great Tribulation as we just mentioned 1,290 days

Vs5-7

Now I don’t think we have to dwell on the fact that the mystery of lawlessness, or the spirit of the A.C. is already at work, that seems evident everywhere we look. I want to focus just briefly on the 3rd point that Paul is making regarding this not being the Day of the Lord and that is because of this restraining force that’s keeping the A.C. from rising to power. Now what is this restraining force who is “He” who now restrains? I’m sure you know that this is specifically in regards to the work and person of the Holy Spirit who is here to convict the world of sin and unrighteousness. and It is the Holy Spirit who is restraining the A.C. from rising to power and allowing Satan just to have free reign.

But once again (you pre-trib rapture people) my question to you is how is it that the Holy Spirit has chosen to go to work in this world presently? Through the church, it's the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the body of Christ, the church who is restraining evil from running rampant in the world. You fundamental Christians are the thorn in this world's side, as long as your light is shining you're exposing the deeds of darkness, as long as you maintain the savor of salt you preserving this world from completely decaying and corrupting. But, when the church is taken out of the way, via the rapture, notice vs 8.

Vs8

Now as for the Holy Spirit being taken out of the way in regards to vs 7 you need to realize that as it says here, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the "way" not out of the "world", the church will be taken out of the world, but the Holy Spirit will still be very much at work. He'll be taken out of the way of the A.C. so that he can come into power, but if He were taken out of the world, there wouldn't be anyone saved during the time of the Great Tribulation. But we know there will be a radical awakening in the souls of 100's of thousands if not millions during this time. But when the church is raptured the next event on the prophetic calendar is the rise to power of the A.C. and We see this again in Rev ch 4 where John as a type of the church is called up into heaven. Ch 5 is a heavenly scene, and then ch 6 starts, "meanwhile back on earth" and the 1st thing we see is the A.C. coming into power followed by all kinds of judgments and horrible events that begin to break out on the earth. But we see here in vs 8, 2 very definite facts regarding the lawless one. #1 He'll be revealed, and #2 He'll be destroyed, he'll be revealed at the removal of the church, and he'll be destroyed at the coming of Christ by the Word of God and the glory of God being thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, Rev 19:20.

Vs9

So again we see here that this man will be under the direct influence and control of Satan himself and will seek to validate himself by means of 3 things, #1 power #2 signs, and #3 lying wonders. Be careful following after signs and wonders, they don't prove anyone is from God; as a matter of fact the next miracle worker that the bible guarantees us is Satanic. Now we know that signs and wonders will follow them that believe, Jesus said that. But be careful that you're not believers following after signs and wonders, there's a big difference; I'm just not to hip on miracle services, believers following after signs and wonders. Because that's not the order I see it presented in the scriptures. Signs and wonders can be very deceiving, didn't Jesus say that many will say on that day, Lord didn't we cast out demons in your name, heal the sick in your name and do all kinds of miraculous things in your name? and Jesus said, I will say to them depart from me you workers of iniquity I never knew you.

This guy will be the real deal with his signs and wonders, but they're Satanic in origin, not godly, now Jesus said in Matt 24 that the great signs and wonders that would be performed would be so convincing that if it were possible, they would deceive even the elect. But it's not possible, because they'll know who this guy is, because they'll know what the bible says, that's why it's important that you know what the bible says, because if you know the truth you recognize the lie. (Read vs 9-10)

Vs 10

Why do people perish? Because they don't receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

Vs 11-12

God has said, that His Spirit would not always strive with man. There comes a point when if you refuse to believe the truth, God will give you over to the lie. and Since these people chose not to receive the love of the truth, God will strengthen them in that position so that they should believe the lie.

It's been said that the man who won't stand for something will fall for anything. and You have only 2 choices in life, to believe the truth or to believe a lie; there's nothing in between. The bible tells us that, "*He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*" Prov 29:1 Which is to say that the more you come into the knowledge of the truth, and the gospel of Jesus Christ the fact that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life. and You choose to stiffen your neck and harden your heart against it, that there will come a time when God will say, "Fine, I'm not going to force you to believe in Me" and He'll give you over to the lie. The lie that says, "I don't need God, I can become a god myself, commander of my own destiny, captain of my own ship." and You'll be condemned because you didn't believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

"Well, wait a minute Jeff, I thought you said there would be great revival during this time, eyes opened, hearts awakened?" I did, "Then how does this line up?" Do you know that there are millions if not billions of people on this planet who have never heard the gospel? In this bubble of Joplin MO you may not realize that, but that's the fact, and when you travel a bit you realize that. and It's my conviction that the primary harvest during those days will be those who've never heard, responding positively to the truth. But you have heard the gospel, I have heard the gospel, and lets just say that now's the time to respond to it, don't wait until this point because it just may be too late then. Because having rejected the truth, you'll accept the lie; you see Christ is the innovator, but Satan is merely an imitator, and when you reject the truth of Jesus Christ you'll buy the lie, the signs and lying wonders along with all unrighteous deception and you will perish. You see the bible says that, "*The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*" 1 Cor 1:18 Don't misunderstand this, God doesn't take away anyone's choice, He simply ratifies the one they made to reject the truth.

Vs13-14

Couple of things real quick, notice in vs 13 Paul calls them, "Beloved by the Lord" it's the Love of God that motivates God to show us grace, to work for us, and through us and give Himself for us. Rom 5:8 Tells us that, "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"

Notice that your salvation didn't come by chance, it was by choice, not yours but God's. Jesus said you didn't choose Me, I chose you (and since we've spent significant time on this not to long ago I won't today but rejoice in the fact that God chose you.) You could be anywhere, doing anything, but God purposed that you would know Him and find grace in His sight, now, why did He choose you? For salvation, through sanctification, and those 2 always go together, because the witness of your salvation is your sanctification that work of the Holy Spirit in your life in setting you apart from the things of the world unto the things of God. The Holy Spirit and belief in the truth being the agents through which He accomplishes that work.

Vs15

Now don't be confused, not the traditions of man that the Lord condemned but rather as it says here the traditions that we received from Word of God. Baptism, the Lord's table, the study of God's Word, praying always, giving thanks in all things, the assembling together as a corporate body, Paul is saying continue on in these things.

Vs16-17

What's Paul doing, reminding the of their blessed hope, their assured expectation, and guaranteed certainty that Jesus Christ will come again and receive them unto Himself, what a good hope, what a comfort to know, and may God establish us as well in that hope lest we forget the hope that we have concerning Christ's coming.

Maybe you're here today, and you don't have this good hope, God would have you know that all that can change before you walk out those doors. If you'll simply respond to the gospel rather than reject it, and accept Jesus Christ into your heart and into your life, you can enter into the awareness that God from the beginning chose you for salvation and He'll sanctify you today, He'll cleanse you and make you new, will you let Him do that today?