

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Second Coming Letters of Paul – Part 17

### II Thessalonians – Part 4

#### I. Exposition of Chapter 2 (continued).

A. Verse 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,”

1. “Let no one deceive you by any means...” – One of the greatest characteristics of the last days, just prior to the coming of the Lord, is deception. The word “deceive” means; “to cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth”<sup>1</sup> Note the following verses pertaining to the last days:

“For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.” – Matthew 24:24-25

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

I Timothy 4:1

2. “...for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first...” – The words, “falling away” are one Greek word which is “*apostasia*” which is where we get the word “apostasy.” This word means; “to rise up in open defiance of authority, with the presumed intention to overthrow it or to act in complete opposition to its demands—to rebel against, to revolt, to engage in insurrection, rebellion”<sup>2</sup> Paul is prophesying that just prior to the coming of the Lord, there will be a significant amount of professing Christians, who will leave the faith and actually rise up in rebellion against the Lord. Concerning this, Dr. Thomas Constable writes:

“One major event is the rebellion (lit., ‘the falling away,’ *hē apostasia*, from whence comes the English word ‘apostasy’). This is a revolt, a departure, an abandoning of a position once held. This rebellion, which will take place within the professing church, will be a departure from the truth that God has revealed in His Word. True, apostasy has characterized the church almost from its inception, but Paul referred to a specific distinguishable apostasy that will come in the future (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1–3; 2 Tim. 3:1–5; 4:3–4; James 5:1–8; 2 Peter 2; 3:3–6; Jude). He had already told his readers about it (2 Thes. 2:5).”<sup>3</sup>

3. “...and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,” – A better translation of the phrase, “man of sin” would be “man of lawlessness.” This would mean that this man will be opposed to the law of God and rebel against it. Pertaining to the phrase “son of perdition”, Grant Richison writes:

“The word ‘perdition’ indicates loss of well being, not of being. This ‘man of sin’ is here the son of eternal perdition. He is the son of eternal *ruin*, not annihilation. This is his proper destiny (Romans 9:22; Philippians 1:28; 3:19; Hebrews 10:39; 2 Peter 2:1, 3; 3:7, 16; Revelation 17:8, 11). He is a man doomed to eternal damnation. It is the opposite of a saved person.”<sup>4</sup>

- a. Most scholars agree that this is referring to a particular individual who will come to prominence in the last days and be the antithesis of Christ, or the “Antichrist.” Philip Comfort writes:

“‘The man of lawlessness’ or ‘the man of rebellion’ (NIV) is ‘the anarchist.’ He is opposed to all moral, religious, and civil law. Just as Christ embodied righteousness, so the ‘man of lawlessness’ will embody lawlessness and rebellion (see Dan 11:36). This one is probably the same as ‘the Antichrist’ (1 John 2:18; 4:3). He will perpetrate the worst crime ever: that of claiming to be God and demanding worship from all human beings. In this regard, he is the worst of sinners; therefore, it is understandable why he came to be known as ‘the man of sin.’ However, the title ‘the man of lawlessness’ not only has superior attestation, but it aptly describes the one who incites the eschatological apostasy.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 366.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 495.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 718.

<sup>4</sup>Grant Richison, *Verse by Verse through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006), 2 Th 2:3.

<sup>5</sup>Philip W. Comfort, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Volume 16: Philippians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008.)

B. Verse 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.” We see in this verse that this “Antichrist” will set himself up to be worshiped.

1. “...who opposes...all that is called God or that is worshiped...” – This means he will come against all other gods, of every religion and cult, including the Living God.
2. “...who...exalts himself above all...” – He will be lifted up in pride and attempt to exalt himself even as Lucifer did (Isaiah 14:12-15).
3. “...so that he sits as God in the temple of God...” – Many believe that this is referring to a future, literal temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. If this is the case, then Jesus cannot come yet for there has been no temple rebuilt as of yet. Others note that the “temple” is used by Paul elsewhere to speak of the Church or Christians, therefore some think the Antichrist’s temple will be the apostate church.

C. Verse 5 – “Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?” – Paul had taught them about these things in person and was reminding them of these things and, possibly, clarifying what he had taught. It’s noteworthy to point out that Paul thought it necessary to teach new believers, as were the Thessalonians, about the coming of the Lord and the end times.

D. Verses 6-7 – “And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 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.”

- a. What or Who is “restraining” the “man of lawlessness” (the Antichrist) from being revealed? This verse seems to indicate that Paul expected the Thessalonians to understand what this meant. Perhaps he detailed what he meant by this when he was with them. Unfortunately, modern scholars do not seem to be certain what this is referring to. (Craig Keener and Michael Brown write that there are more than thirty different views concerning this.)<sup>6</sup> The Pre-tribulation Rapture view usually teaches that it’s the Holy Spirit and/or the Church that is taken out of the way (raptured; caught up) before the Antichrist can be revealed. This, however, does not line up with verse 1 of this same chapter. Others suggest that it refers to the Presence of God leaving any future, literal temple built in Jerusalem and others think it could be just God’s “staying hand” being removed and allowing the i Antichrist to be revealed. Again, there are many views and no one can be dogmatic about this. Grant Richison writes:

**“God is currently ‘restraining’ the man of lawlessness. The word ‘restraining’ comes from two words: to hold and down. Acts uses this word for holding a ship on course. The idea here is to hold down or back, to check, restrain, control.”<sup>7</sup>**

- b. “...the mystery of lawlessness is already at work...” – The word “mystery” means; “a matter to the knowledge of which initiation is necessary; a secret which would remain such but for revelation, Mat\_3:11; Rom\_11:25; Col\_1:26; a concealed power or principle,” (cf. I John 2:18). Dr. Constable writes:

**“A mystery in the New Testament is a new truth previously unknown before its revelation in the present dispensation. In this case the mystery is the revelation of a future climax of lawlessness in the world. Then and now a movement against divine law directed by Satan was and is operative. But it is being restrained somewhat, and this restraining will continue until the time appointed for revealing the man of sin and the climax of lawlessness.”<sup>8</sup>**

E. Verse 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.”

- a. In 1:6-10, we saw that at Jesus’ coming, He will take vengeance and judge those who have not obeyed the Gospel by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. At that same time, He will bring also bring judgment upon the “lawless one”, the Antichrist.
- b. “...the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth...” – Just one word from the Lord’s mouth is enough to destroy him. (cf. Revelation 19:11-21).
- c. The Lord will also “...destroy (the lawless one) with the brightness of His coming.” – The Complete Biblical Library states:

**“The very brightness of Christ’s coming, a glory which blesses the believers, will help bring violent destruction to the Antichrist and his armies.”<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>6</sup>Michael L. Brown and Craig S. Keener, *Not Afraid of the Antichrist: Why We Don’t Believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen, 2019), 139.

<sup>7</sup>Grant Richison, *Verse by Verse through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006), 2 Th 2:6.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 719.

<sup>9</sup>*The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 868.