

## 2 Thessalonians 2

### 2 Thessalonians 2.1-3

**V1** – This is the beginning of one of the most misunderstood passages in the New Testament

-We have many groups who want to use this passage to set the time for the Second Coming

-**What did Christ say about the date of the Second Coming?** *Matthew 24:36* – only the Father in heaven knows

-**What would have encouraged Christians at Thessalonica to try to set a date for the Second Coming?** The persecution there

-**What will be our role at the Second Coming according to v 1?** We will be gathered together with Jesus Christ

**V2** – **What were some people at Thessalonica teaching?** That the “*day of the Lord*” had come

-**By what authority were some teaching that?** Spirit, message, a letter from Paul

-Notice *2 Thessalonian 3:17* – Paul always signed his letters in a distinctive way – maybe that was to keep out forgeries

-**What was the effect of those teachings on some of the Christians?** It confused them

**V3** – **What events had to occur first before the Second Coming?** The apostasy and the man of lawlessness had to be revealed (the son of destruction)

### 2 Thessalonians 2.4-10

**V4** – **What are the characteristics of the man of sin?** He sets himself above all other gods and sits in the temple of God and displays himself as being God

-**Any ideas?** Many Protestant writers say that the man of sin is the pope

-*V 4* certainly would be a good description of the pope

-The Westminster Confession of Faith identifies the pope as the man of sin

-The preface to the King James Version also identifies the pope as the man of sin

-Other ideas that have been set forth: Kaiser Wilhelm, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin

-In fact, whenever there is a dictator in the world, some people say that he is the man of sin

-**What might the “*temple of God*” be?** The temple in Jerusalem or the church

**V5** – **What commandment did Paul make to the Thessalonians?** That they would remember what he said about those things when he was with them

**V6** – **What was the situation with the man of sin at that time?** He was being restrained

-**What would happen in the future?** He would be revealed

**V7** – **What force was already at work at the time?** Lawlessness

-**Why was lawlessness a mystery?** Because it works without being seen

-The last “*he*” in *v 7* possibly should be capitalized (possible reference to God)

-In other words, God will restrain the man of sin until he (God) decides to take him out of the way

**V 8 – What will be the ultimate destiny of the man of sin?** He will be slain by the Lord  
-**What event will coincide with the slaying of the man of sin?** The Second Coming of Jesus Christ  
-The man of sin could be the general idea of sinful people – they exalt themselves against God, they will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus, and the philosophy of humanism would always be a part of this idea  
-It sounds similar to the idea of the anti-Christ (*1 John 2*) – not a specific person, but a general concept of rebellion against God

**V 9 – What would be the reason for the Second Coming of Jesus?** To stop the activity of Satan  
-**What would Satan be doing?** Having power and signs and wonders

**V 10 – Who will perish with Satan?** Those who do not love the truth  
-**Will people be lost against their will?** No – they choose not to live the truth  
-Conclusion about the man of sin: many identify him as a specific person (pope, dictator, etc.)  
-Others think of him more as the general concept of rebellion against God – so it might be that Paul was saying that before the Second Coming, there would be a general period of lawlessness and rebellion against God  
-But this would seem to contradict *Matthew 24:36-44*, where Jesus said that there would be no signs for his Second Coming

## **2 Thessalonians 2.11-12**

**V 11 – Is God going to cause innocent people to be lost?** No – *v 10* – they did not receive the truth  
-**What would God do to those who did not receive the truth?** Deceive them more  
-**Why would God do that?** To make it very clear that they were in rebellion against God  
-Examples: snake handling, astrology, UFO's, ghosts (things that look very ignorant to most people)

**V 12 – What is another characteristic of those people?** They took pleasure in sin

## **2 Thessalonians 2.13-15**

**V 13 – *V 1-12* were rather dark, so this passage gets back to a more cheerful note**  
-**For what was Paul teaching?** That God has chosen the Thessalonians to be saved  
-**In what sense had God chosen the Thessalonians “*from the beginning*”?** God arranged the plan of salvation, and any one who meets the terms of the plan become chosen of God to be saved  
-See notes on *Ephesians 1* for more details on predestination

**V 14 – How did this calling take place?** Through the gospel

-Those who say that they are “*called*” to preach, etc., do not understand the nature of calling in the New Testament

-*John 12:32* – Christ was lifted up from the earth and therefore draws all people to himself (through the gospel)

**V 15** – **What did Paul ask the Thessalonians to do?** Stand firm and hold to the traditions they had received

-**In what ways had they received traditions?** Word of mouth and letter from apostles

-We can see that the New Testament was still in the process of being written

## **2 Thessalonians 2.16-17**

**V 16** – **What do we gain as Christians, according to this verse?** Eternal comfort and good hope (as opposed to the false comfort and false hope that the world offers)

**V 17** – A beautiful doxology to end this section of the letter

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