

Reassurance for the Fearful Church

Study 2. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

A. Paul Requests the Thessalonians Not to Fear That the Day of the Lord Has Already Come. 2:1-2

1. What great event did Paul have in mind in 2:1? _____
_____ ¹
2. What was the frame of mind of the Thessalonians? 2:2a _____

3. What does he request them *not* to be? 2:2a _____

4. Paul lists three possible sources for their fear. What are they? 2:2b
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. What were they afraid had already begun? 2:2c _____
_____ ²
6. Can you speculate what, in their own experience, had persuaded them to believe something that was not true? _____
_____ ³

¹ 2:1 - the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to Him: This seems, doubtless, to refer to the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18), which Paul had already taught them would take place before the destructive "Day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:1-11).

² 2:2 - the Day of the Lord: In a previous study of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (Study 7. "The Christian and 'The Day of the Lord'") we examined several O.T. passages and one N.T. passage that discuss "The Day of the LORD." Those passages include Isaiah 13:6-13; Joel 2:30-32; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-18; and 2 Peter 3:10-13. What is the chief characteristic of "The Day of the LORD" according to all those passages?

³ It is my belief that the Thessalonian believers had become wrongly persuaded that they had somehow missed the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1), and had already entered the judgmental era of "The Day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:1-11; 2 Thess. 2:2), the Tribulation period. Obviously they had received some false information that they had already entered "The Day of the Lord" (2:2). What in their own experience seemed to confirm the false teaching they had been given? (See 2 Thess. 1:4-6 to answer this question.)

It is also my firm belief that Paul had taught them a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Had he taught them a Post-Tribulation Rapture, they would have been joyful that relief was less than seven years distant! Paul,

B. The Accurate Sequence of “The Day of the Lord” 2:3-12

1. What does Paul warn them? 2:3a _____
_____. Paul instructed them that the time of judgment known as “The Day of the Lord” could not begin until some intervening events took place first.

2. What was an important event that Paul stated would need to take place before “The Day of the Lord” could begin? 2:3b _____
_____ ⁴

3. What was the *next* event that would need to take place? 2:3c _____
_____. By the way, Paul used several phrases to describe this sinister individual. Let’s identify them...
 - a. _____ 2:3c
 - b. _____ 2:3d
 - c. _____ 2:8a

4. Let’s describe the actions of this sinister individual. 2:4
 - a. Whom will he oppose? 2:4a _____

 - b. Where will he take his seat? 2:4b _____

 - c. How will he display himself? 2:4c _____

5. Is this the first time the Thessalonians had heard this information? 2:5

in 2 Thess. 2, endeavored to teach them that their false conclusion – that they had missed the Rapture and were already in the Tribulation – could not have been true. They could not possibly be in the “Day of the Lord” already, for it would not come until some other events intervened. That is the subject of Paul’s letter beginning in 2 Thess. 2:3.

⁴ 2:3 - the apostasy: This seems to be a global event in which the world as a whole turns away from God. What significant event could trigger that apostasy? (See 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 2 Thess. 2:1).

6. Why has this sinister figure not yet been revealed? 2:6 _____

7. What is already at work in the world? 2:7a _____

8. What will one day be removed? 2:7b _____⁵

9. Who will then be revealed? 2:8a _____
10. Who will kill this evil dictator? 2:8b _____
11. How will He do it? 2:8c _____
(See Rev. 19:15, 21.)
12. What is the power source behind this evil world dictator? 2:9a _____

13. What kind of powers will this dictator possess? 2:9b _____

14. What is one of his favorite tactics? 2:10a _____

15. Why will he succeed in deceiving so many? 2:10b _____

16. What will God send them? 2:11a _____
17. Why? 2:11b _____
18. What is the destiny of those who are deceived by this deceptive dictator?
2:12a _____

⁵ 2:7 - "he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way." The most likely referent here is the Holy Spirit in the Church. When the Holy Spirit within the Church is removed from this world at the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1), there will be nothing and no one left to restrain the evil world dictator, "The Man of Lawlessness," known elsewhere as "The Antichrist" (1 John 2:18).

19. How does Paul characterize these deluded people? 2:12b
 - a. They did not believe _____
 - b. They took pleasure in _____

C. Paul's Gratitude for the Thessalonians' Salvation from "the Day of the Lord" 2:13-17

1. Why did Paul say it was necessary to thank God for them? 2:13a 6

- a. What Divine action did God use to bring this about? 2:13b

- b. What human action was also necessary? 2:13c _____

- c. How did God call these Thessalonians to Himself? 2:14a _____

- d. What would these Thessalonians eventually bring about? 2:14b

2. Paul's call to steadfastness. What does he ask these Thessalonians to do? 2:15 _____
3. Paul's concluding prayer. 2:16-17
 - a. What has motivated God the Father in His actions toward us? 2:16a _____
 - b. What has He given us? 2:16b _____

 - c. What does He ask that Jesus and God might do for their hearts? 2:17a _____
 - d. How would this empower the Thessalonians? 2:17b _____

⁶ 2:13 - God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation: This salvation includes, of course, eternal salvation. But it includes also salvation from the wrath of "the Day of the Lord" – the Tribulation. See also 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:2-9.

D. Thinking about 2 Thessalonians 2.

1. Do you understand the correct order of events as outlined in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
2. Once the Church has been Raptured, nothing will be able to stop the world's headlong slide into apostasy and embracing of a powerful, evil world ruler. Can you see signs the world will be ready to do that?
3. Based on 2 Thess. 2:13-14, for what can you thank God?
4. What is our responsibility? 2 Thess. 2:15
5. We all need comfort and strength in order to do what? 2 Thess. 2:17

For additional information on the Rapture see <http://wordexplain.com/glossary.html#Rapture>

For more information on the Tribulation see <http://wordexplain.com/glossary.html#Tribulation>

For more information on the Antichrist see <http://wordexplain.com/glossary.html#Antichrist>

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2 Thessalonians 2**

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