

2 Thessalonians 2 and The Revealing of the Anti-Christ

A common belief among Christians is that believers will be taken up in a rapture before major events concerning end time prophecies take place, including the Antichrist's rise to power. This is referred to as a "pre-tribulation" view of Christ's coming for His Church. This article compares the pre-tribulation view with 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and the revealing of the Antichrist.

Paul had visited the Thessalonians during his second journey and taught them not only the gospel of Jesus Christ, but also things concerning the last days. In 2 Thess. 2:5 Paul wrote ***"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"*** Verses 1-4 list some of those things he had told them about, which included the Lord's coming and gathering of believers unto Him, the "day of Christ", and revealing of the Antichrist. In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul had also written how some of them would "sleep" (have died) and some would "wake" (still be alive) when the day of the Lord comes. Whether he knew at that time the dispensation of the grace of God would continue on for nearly two thousand years (two days of Hosea 6:1-2), or if he expected those things to take place during their lives, Paul's writings to the Thessalonians applies directly to the Gentile church or "body of Christ" today. Also note, Paul wrote to the Philippians and Corinthians concerning the day of Christ, and he wrote to Timothy concerning the "last days". All these things apply to Christians today and we should be concerned with end time events as our apostle (Rom. 11:13) wrote to us about them.

When searching commentaries and published information on 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, there is a lack of clarity in the various interpretations given. I believe this might come from a pre-supposed view that Christ's coming to gather His body of believers takes place before the "tribulation". The context of verses 1-6 is quite simple. In his initial visit to Thessalonica Paul had told them the "man of sin" or the Antichrist would be revealed before the day of Christ could come. After he left, someone was trying to convince them the day of Christ had already come, or was nearly upon them, even though the Antichrist had not yet been revealed. Paul wrote to clarify the issue and keep his converts from being deceived. There is no ambiguity in what is written: ***for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed...*** This issue is of great importance for Christians to understand.

Because the Lord's coming in the clouds for the saints in-Christ takes place in the day of Christ, the pre-tribulation or immanent rapture view does not align with this passage. If we are to be raptured out before the end time prophecies begin, how can the man of sin rise to power, allow a temple to be constructed in Jerusalem, and then take it over claiming to be God, all the while Christians are still here? To uphold the immanent rapture theory a person would have to alter the wording of 2 Thess. 2:2 in the Authorized King James Bible. Some hold that Paul really meant the "day of the LORD" when he used the term the "day of Christ", and some contend that Paul's reference to the "day of Christ" in 2 Thess. 2:2 is different from the "day of Christ" he wrote about to the Philippians (Phil 1:6 & 10). Finally, there is also the view that the day of Christ covers not only the rapture, but a broad span of time all the way out to the second advent of Christ. In this view it is said Paul was not referring to a part of the day of Christ which involves the rapture, but to the part of the day of Christ which takes place after the rapture. However, regardless of how long the day of Christ is or what all is included in the day of Christ, there are two things which are clear about this concern: one – saints in Christ are here until that day (Phil. 1:6-10 & 1 Co. 1:7-8), and two – the man of sin will sit in the temple of God claiming to be God before that day comes.

A concern which is not addressed by many pre-tribulation interpretations is: to whom the man of sin is revealed. The man of sin is revealed to the Thessalonians of course, otherwise Paul's writing provides no benefit to them. The writing was to comfort their troubled minds by ensuring them the day of Christ was not yet upon them. How were they assured the day of Christ had not come? The man of sin had not

yet sat in the temple claiming to be God. Verse 6, ***And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.*** The revealing of the Antichrist withholds, or must precede, the day of Christ coming about. ***And now ye know...*** If the Thessalonians were to be raptured up to heaven before the Antichrist is revealed the writing is of no use to them, it provides no comfort. It is the Thessalonians (Body of Christ) to whom the man of sin will be revealed.

Listed below is my own commentary on 2 Thessalonians 2:1-6

The FIRST revealing of the Antichrist

(1) Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him... The need to avoid being deceived concerning when the day of Christ would come, is of such great importance, that Paul ascribes the coming of the Lord to illustrate how strongly he desires for them to know the truth.

(2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Here, someone was working to convince them that the day of Christ was at hand, meaning it was about to come or had just begun. To understand the context, we need to consider why such a thing would be so troublesome for a Christian. It is commonly understood that Jesus Christ comes, and we meet Him in the air during this day (I Co. 1:8, 2 Co. 1:14, 2:16, 2 Ti. 4:1, Phil. 1:6 & 10), so it would seem the Thessalonians would have been joyful and not troubled to be told the day of Christ was at hand.

Why then would it have been so troublesome for the day of Christ to come upon them unaware? Maybe they understood the troublesome events of the trumpets listed in Revelation occur in the day of Christ before He comes to gather them. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I Co. 15: 51-52) that the resurrection takes place “at the last trump”. Considering other things Paul wrote concerning this, the most logical conclusion is the “last trump” is the last one in the series of trumpets given in Revelation. 2 Timothy 4:1 tells us that Christ will judge the quick and the dead “at his appearing and kingdom”. Christ receives the kingdom at the seventh trumpet of those in Revelation (Rev. 11:15) and judges the saints at the same time (Rev. 11:18). Paul’s reference to “last trump” is not referring to the last trumpet of God forever, nor is it the last trumpet to sound in this world (Amos 2:2 & Zeph. 1:6). I can only conclude it is the last in a series and I have confidence God’s word is gives us the series (Rev. Ch. 8 -11).

Another thought as to why the Thessalonians were troubled about the day of Christ, is they may have had sudden realization their loved ones, who were not saved according to Paul’s gospel, were about to be doomed to eternal damnation. When that day arrives, we Christians might also be troubled when we consider those persons we had opportunity to witness the gospel to, but failed to do so.

(3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there comes a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (4) who opposeth and exaltheeth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Now the issue is clear, it is written in Paul’s epistle, it is scripture, and it is part of God’s word. There are two events which must take place before the day of Christ: a falling away and the man of sin sitting in the temple. Verse 2 instructs that no matter who tells or writes anything different, do not let yourselves be deceived!

Because the coming of the Lord to gather those in-Christ takes place within the day of Christ, the church will experience or be aware of these two events. There are various opinions as to what the falling away

is, however I believe it involves Christians, who lack understanding of these basic end time issues, being deceived by false spiritual powers during that time. Such a thing might happen with Christians who expect to be raptured out before things related to the tribulation come. When the trouble starts a person might lose hope in his salvation and “fall away” thinking he has missed the rapture (Luke 21:26). A similar thing happened in the past where the faith of some believers was overthrown - **2 Timothy 2:17-18, And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.** If this is the case, a Christian would not lose his salvation but might lose reward at the judgement seat of Christ.

(5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? Paul had already told them about these things when he was with them (Acts 17), however the price to pay for being deceived is too great. Paul, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, determined to write and make certain they knew specific end time events would take place before Jesus Christ would come in the clouds for them. Knowing this is what kept them from being deceived. Too many Christians today are not being taught these things and might not be prepared (Luke 21:26). **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there comes a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed... so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**

(6) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. I do not understand how those who believe Christ could come at any moment now can accept verse 6 as it is written and still believe there will be a rapture before the Antichrist comes into play. “And now ye know” – the “ye” is the Thessalonians (Body of Christ) and for the passage to have any value, the revealing of the Antichrist must pertain to the Thessalonians. If the Body of Christ is already taken up to heaven before the Antichrist is revealed, why do we need to be concerned with this issue?

Continuing in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, a revealing of the Antichrist is described again in verse 8. Although it is commonly believed this is the same revealing as given in verses 1-6, this is a different revealing. In the revealing described in verses 1-6, the Antichrist is revealed to believers when he is a normal man sitting in the temple. In this second revealing, the Antichrist has Satan in him, and he is revealed to the unbelieving lost. I believe the Antichrist rises to power and sits in the temple fulfilling the time given in Dan. 8:13-14. After he leaves the temple, he is killed by the hand of man and rises from the dead. His rising from the dead coincides with Satan being cast of heaven (Rev. 12:7-12) where presumably the spirit of Satan enters his body, and he continues forty-two months (Rev. 13:5). It is after these things that he is destroyed by Jesus Christ when Jesus comes on the white horse (Rev. chapter 19).

Although the scriptures do not specifically state the Antichrist is killed and raises from the dead, the following passages support this concept.

Revelation 13:3-5, And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wandered after the beast... and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Zechariah 11:16-17, For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land... he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Revelation 17:10-11, And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even

he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. These kings are those who had rule over Israel and are possibly Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medes/Persians, Greece. This would be the five who are fallen. The “one is” is the sixth, who was Rome and in power at the time John wrote Revelation. The seventh is the Antichrist who is “not yet come”. Note the seventh king “must continue a short space” and “is not” indicating he is killed at some point. The eighth king is of the seven and goes into perdition, therefore I conclude the seventh king is killed and rises from the dead with the spirit of Satan in him, becoming eighth king (Rev. 13:5).

Ezekiel chapter 28 also gives some valuable insight into this concept. In this chapter the prince and king of Tyrus are given as a type of the Antichrist to come (the **seventh** and **eighth** kings noted above). The king of Tyrus is clearly a reference to Satan in the future, and the prince of Tyrus is described in likeness to the “man of sin” in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. These appear to be a type of the Antichrist before he raises from the dead (the **seventh king**), and the Antichrist after he raises from the dead with Satan in him (the **eighth king**). Here are some things listed in Ezekiel 28 which are parallel types to the Antichrist:

Prince of Tyrus = Antichrist as a man who sits in the temple

- **Ez. 28:2**, his heart is lifted up, he says I am a God and sits in the seat of God, yet thou art a man, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. This is a direct parallel to 2 Thess. 2:3-4 where the man of sin sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. The Antichrist is not killed and raised from the dead until after his time of sitting in the temple is fulfilled (2 Thess. 2:6).
- **Ez. 28:3-6**, he is wiser than Daniel and gets riches with his wisdom and understanding. This coincides with Antichrist described in Dan. 7:8, who has a mouth speaking great things and understanding dark sentences (Dan.8:23). This also coincides with Dan.11:28 where the Antichrist amasses great riches during his time of sitting in the temple.
- **Ez. 28:2 & 6**, **Because** he claims to be God and **because** he sits in the seat of God, he will die at the hand of strangers. This “die at the hand of strangers” is not when Jesus Christ destroys him (Rev. 19) but is when he is killed by man after his time in the temple is fulfilled.
- **Ez. 28:9** but thou shalt be a man, and no God in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Again, the Antichrist is a mortal man while he sits in the temple. If he had already been killed and raised from the dead, man could not kill him, it would require the power Jesus Christ. His death by the hand of man is indicated in Zech. 11:17 concerning the “idol” shepherd who has a wound with a sword, and in Rev. 13:3 where one of the beast’s heads has a deadly wound that was healed. Also, the seventh king of Rev. 17:10-11 continues a short space and is described as the beast that “was, and is not” further indicating he is killed before becoming the eighth king.

King of Tyrus = Antichrist risen from the dead with Satan in him

- **Ez. 28:12-15**, This is clearly a reference to Satan and him being created by God.

- **Ez. 28:16**, He is cast out of the mountain of God. This coincides with Dan. 11:45 at the end of the Antichrist's time (42 months of Rev. 13:5), right when he is destroyed by the White Horse Rider of Rev. 19.
- **Ez. 28:18**, the king of Tyrus is devoured by fire and brought to ashes upon the earth. This is the Antichrist with Satan in him being killed or destroyed by Jesus Christ (Rev. 12, 2 Thess. 2:8, and Dan. 8:25), whereas the prince or Tyrus, or man Antichrist, is killed by the hand of man.

With these things in mind, I believe the man of sin, who is revealed to Christians before the day of Christ comes, is the **seventh king** listed in Rev. 17:10-11. The seventh king is killed after his time of sitting in the temple is complete (Dan. 8:13-14) and he rises as the eighth king. The **eighth king** is revealed as "that Wicked" (the man Antichrist now with Satan in him) to those who "received not the love of the truth" (2 Thess. 9-12). He is revealed to the lost as the god they have been ignorantly worshiping all along.

Listed below is commentary on 2 Thessalonians 2:7-13

The SECOND revealing of the Antichrist

(7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

Verse seven holds the key to understanding there are two revealing of the Antichrist. In this verse there is something on going or working that is called the "mystery of iniquity". When dealing with a mystery that is being allowed to "work", the working is in the mind of someone, who is being kept in the dark about certain facts. This verse also tells us, that someone else, "he" in the verse, is allowing this mystery to continue until he is taken out of the way. His being taken out of the way unveils the mystery, and those who were in the dark are then enlightened.

The passage does not tell us who the "he" is that is allowing this mystery to continue. A common view is that the "he" is the Body of Christ and when God takes us up to heaven the Antichrist will be revealed. This cannot be correct because the Antichrist is revealed before the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. 2:1-6). Although I am not certain, the "he" might be the Holy Spirit (John 14:17 & Acts 8:16). It is the Holy Spirit who has the power to allow the mystery of iniquity to continue in the minds of unbelievers.

(8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

The opening or unveiling of the mystery is the revealing of "that Wicked". There are several verses (I John 2:13, 3:12, 5:18, & Matt. 13:38) which label Satan as the "wicked one", therefore I conclude "that Wicked" is Satan. The revealing of "that Wicked" is a revealing of Satan in the flesh to his followers. With the mystery of godliness involving God being manifest in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16), It is plausible the mystery of iniquity involves Satan being manifest the flesh.

As described above, the seventh king dies and rises to become the eighth king. In this hypothesis his death would coincide with Satan being cast out of heaven to the earth (Rev. 12:7-9), and Satan's spirit entering the body of the man Antichrist, like what happened with Judas (John 13:27). Supporting verses are Rev. 12:12, 13:3-5, Zech. 11:16-17, Isaiah 14:29 and Ez. ch.28. This is why the Antichrist is given the

title here as “that Wicked” – he has Satan in him. Also, it is Jesus Christ who consumes “that Wicked” further indicating this is no longer a regular man.

Who is “that Wicked” revealed to? Not to the Body of Christ church as the man Antichrist will have already been revealed to believers when he sits in the temple claiming to be God. The Antichrist with Satan in him, will be revealed to the lost; those “who received not the love of the truth”.

(9)-(10) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

The mystery of iniquity, which is currently working, involves people unknowingly worshipping Satan. According to God’s word, if a person does not have the Son, he can have no communication with the God, (I Ti. 2:5). If a person denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, he has not the Father and is “antichrist” (1 John 4:14 & I John 2:22-23). There are many people across the world who think they are praying to the Creator God while at the same time they deny who Jesus Christ is. These people are under the mystery of iniquity - they are actually praying to Satan and do not know it. When “that Wicked” is revealed, such persons will then know who they have been following.

(11)-(12) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Lest we think God is unfair by allowing unbelievers to be under the mystery of iniquity, and by sending them a strong delusion damming them to hell, note verse 11 begins with “And for this cause”. The cause is “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (verse 10), and because “they had pleasure in unrighteousness” (verse 12). At this point they do not think about changing their ways as it is too late (Prov. 1:24-33). The scripture does not specifically say what the delusion is, however, I believe they become willful followers of Satan. Once “that Wicked” is revealed to the lost, they will think they are on the winning side and will likely go the great battle believing no one can overcome their god. The mind set of these who have been sent a delusion from God is described in Revelation 13:4, ***And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?***