

Second Thessalonians 2:1-17

Introduction:

1. *Having introduced the Second Coming of our Lord for their comfort, Paul explains its timing further; for they were troubled by all that he had written about it in the five chapters of the first epistle.*
2. *Our study of Daniel, especially the little horn of Daniel 7, will help much with this second chapter.*
3. *The study of this chapter, were we to plumb only significant facts of Rome, could take many months.*
4. *It is the reader's responsibility to obtain answers for questions or pursue further study of the subjects.*

Introduction: Paul clarifies the timing of Christ's coming, the Man of Sin, and exhorts to faith.

1. Troubled by his previous epistle that the Coming was imminent, Paul corrects them (2:1-3).
2. He then introduces the great enemy of the church, the Man of Sin foretold by Daniel (2:4-7).
3. Having introduced the Man of Sin, he explains his great ruin by Christ's coming (2:8-10).
4. Since the Man of Sin will prey upon man's ignorance, Paul identifies their salvation (2:11-14).
5. With their salvation secured by Christ and the gospel, he exhorts them to faithfulness (2:15-17).

1:1 Paul asks to consider Christ's coming with them from all he had written about it before.

1. He wrote of it in every chapter of the first epistle (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11,23).
2. He is clearly writing of Christ's coming for His saints (1:10; I Thess 4:13-18; 5:10-11).
3. There are not two comings – one *with* His saints and then another one *for* His saints!
 - a. When he comes *for* His saints, He will also come *with* saints (I Thess 4:13-18).
 - b. There is one resurrection of all men – good and evil (Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29).
 - c. He just taught clearly that judgment and salvation are in one coming (1:7-10).
 - d. There is no reason to think he did not combine them before (I Thes 4:13 – 5:11).
4. C.I. Scofield and the dupes that follow his perverse Bible are in great error at this point!
 - a. They need two comings to make room for Daniel's lost 70th week, which they take from Messiah the Prince and give to "Prince Antichrist" (Dan 9:26-27).
 - b. His Plymouth Brethren ideas required two comings to reverence Edward Irving, John Darby, the Jesuits, and other speculators of the 1830s, who "discovered" and promoted the great rapture hoax of a secret coming for the saints to leave the world filled with unbelievers. Are you having visions of "Left Behind"?
 - c. He divides without any grounds the "day of the Lord" from the "day of Christ." He writes, "The theme of Second Thessalonians is, unfortunately, obscured by a mistranslation in the A.V. of 2.2, where 'day of Christ is at hand' (I Cor. 1.8, *note*) should be, 'day of the Lord is now present' (Isa. 2.12, *refs.*). The Thessalonian converts were 'shaken in mind' and 'troubled,' supposing . . . that the persecutions from which they were suffering were those of the 'great and terrible day of the Lord,' from which they had been taught to expect deliverance by 'the day of Christ, and our gathering together unto him' (2.1)." [SRB, 1271.]
 - d. It is indeed unfortunate for his lying system! So he blatantly changes the words!
 - e. He perverts verse 2:2 twice by making it read, "day of the Lord now present."
 - f. There is no "great and terrible day of the Lord" in all the inspired Scriptures!
 - g. The "great and dreadful day of the Lord" was fulfilled in 70 AD (Malachi 4:5).
 - h. The "great and notable day of the Lord" was fulfilled in 70 AD (Acts 2:20,40).
 - i. The "great and the terrible day of the Lord" was fulfilled in 70 AD (Joel 2:31).
 - j. Jesus Christ is Lord! And the day of Christ is precisely the day of the Lord! All one must do is read without changing words! Lord, save us from such folly!
 - k. The "Lord himself" will descend from heaven with a shout for His saints (4:16).

- 2:2 Paul comforted the shaken saints that the coming of Jesus Christ was not imminent at all.**
1. As the Millerites, Bible students like C.I. Scofield, were flattened by their Great Disappointment in 1844, Paul knew that unrealistic expectations would be dangerous.
 2. If you thought Christ could come at any time, you might very well be negligent on the job and neglectful of your ordinary, carnal duties of life here (3:6-15; I Thess 4:11-12).
 3. They were being tempted to fear by false spirits, false preaching, and a forged epistle.
 4. These words are not written only for their sake, but also for us to answer much heresy.
 5. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ was not an imminent event for them to anticipate.
 - a. The coming of our Lord on Jerusalem was imminent (Mal 4:1-6; Matt 3:10-12; 16:27-28; 24:1-51; Luke 19:41-44; 23:27-31; Act 2:40; I Thes 2:16; Heb 10:25).
 - b. But what of “at hand” in Rom 13:12? Awake to God (Ep 5:8-14; I Thes 5:4-10)!
 - c. But what of “at hand” in Phil 4:5? The Lord is at hand locationally (Ps 139:7)!
 - d. But what of “the day approaching” in Heb 10:25? The end of Israel was near!
 - e. But what of “draweth nigh” in James 5:8-9? The judgment of Israel was near!
 - f. But what of “at hand” in I Peter 4:7? The end of Israel was near (Acts 2:40)!
 - g. But what of “at hand” in Revelation 1:3? Rome occupies most of the book!
 - h. But what of “at hand” in Revelation 22:10? Rome occupies most of the book!

- 2:3 Paul warns with absolute clarity and dogmatism that Antichrist precedes Jesus Christ.**
1. Let God be true, but every man a liar (Rom 3:4). The Pretribulationists are heretics!
 2. There will be many efforts to deceive about this fact, but we have been forewarned!
 3. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ cannot occur prior to the “Antichrist’s” arrival!
 - a. The word “antichrist” and “antichrists” are used only by John in his epistles.
 - b. The beasts and whore of Revelation are not called Antichrist there at all.
 - c. He distinguishes AN ANTICHRIST TO COME and antichrists (I John 2:18).
 - d. He also speaks of the spirit of Antichrist, which was already active (I John 4:3).
 - e. Therefore, we will use the term to describe the little horn of Daniel and John’s beast/whore enemy of the saints. Let every reader study Daniel 7 first.
 - f. The prefix “anti” means either opposer of Christ or pretend Christ. He is both!
 4. There must be a falling away, or apostasy from truth, along with “Antichrist” coming.
 - a. Falling away is doctrinal apostasy or leaving the truth (Gal 1:6; 5:4; Col 1:23; I Tim 1:19; II Tim 1:15; 4:4; Heb 6:6; 10:38; II Peter 3:17).
 - b. Churches were falling away to Judaizers while Paul lived, but that is not meant.
 - c. But he did expressly tell of a very specific apostasy to come (I Timothy 4:1-6).
 - d. These doctrines of devils are specific property of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - e. These doctrines would arrive by spiritual subtlety of devils against the truth.
 5. The Man of Sin would be revealed. He would be clearly identified before Christ comes.
 - a. A man of sin, like a man of war, is one proficient and forward in sin and sinning.
 - b. Collective nouns are single in number, but include all of their species (I Tim 2:11; II Tim 3:17; Ps 10:18; 37:7; Heb 9:7). Futurists want a future single man.
 - c. By comparing Daniel 7:17 and 7:23, the fourth king is truly the fourth kingdom; it is the succession of individual kings during the period of the fourth kingdom.
 - d. The Man of Sin is a collective noun for the successive Roman popes to the end.
 - e. Just as the beasts in Daniel 7 were successions of kings, not solitary kings.
 - f. If the Man of Sin makes war with the saints, he comes before Christ (Dan 7:21).

6. He is called the Son of Perdition, and we should relish this title of our great enemy.
 - a. Perdition means judgment (Phil 1:28; I Tim 6:9; Heb 10:39; II Peter 3:7).
 - b. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Lord, was the son of perdition (John 17:12).
 - c. The beast of John, pagan and papal Rome, goes into perdition (Rev 17:8,11).
 - d. This pagan pervert of Christianity will be judged and cause others to be judged.
 - e. He is a false Christian, not an atheistic politician of the U.N. (I John 2:18-20).
7. The identity of the Man of Sin has intrigued and perplexed many in their speculations.
 - a. Adolph Hitler, Henry Kissinger, and many others have been proposed over time.
 - b. Jean Dixon, America's favorite witch, a devout Roman Catholic, who was "blessed" during an interlude with a snake, said he was born February 5, 1962.
 - c. The simple answer was universally understood and is beyond even questioning.

2:4 The character of Antichrist is described in terms clearly and only applicable to the popes.

1. He opposes all that is called God – he is the enemy of every virtue of the true Godhead.
 - a. He opposes all that is called God – he is the enemy of false and rightful gods.
 - b. He is antichrist, which is to be the enemy of the Godman Christ Jesus, our Lord.
 - c. He speaks of Christ and professes Christ in word, but He denies Him in works.
2. He exalts himself above all this called God – he considers himself both Christ and gods.
 - a. His throne is exalted very high, before which even magistrates have had to bow.
 - b. His throne is exalted very high, while our Lord Jesus Christ was a lowly servant.
 - c. His throne is so high in St. Peter's Basilica that it appears in the sky with the sun and the high altar appears as his footstool.
3. He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is worshipped of any sort in the world!
 - a. Earthly kings have been made to bow before this man and wait as mere servants.
 - b. He accepts worship given to gods, princes, kings, emperors, and God Himself.
4. He sits in the temple of God and pretends to the world to be as God and God Himself!
 - a. The temple of God could not be Jerusalem's temple, for it was soon to perish.
 - b. The temple of God is Christ's church (I Cor 3:16-17; II Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22).
 - c. Of course, the church that was once at Rome has been corrupted unbelievably!
 - d. The statements of the popes of their God-like office and divine titles are Legion.
 - e. Yet the text declares that he displays himself as God, which marks his conduct.
 - f. He sits in the bishop's chair of the Roman church, which is the Latin *cathedra*.
 - g. Where there is a bishop's seat, the church is called a cathedral from the Latin.
 - h. When the pope speaks *ex cathedra*, from the bishop's seat, he is infallible!
 - i. He must be an apostate Christian to be like Judas and fulfill John (I Jn 2:18-19).

2:5 Paul had told them the proper timing and the identification of this great enemy in person.

1. He appeals to the fact he was not teaching new things: he had taught the things before.
2. They should not have been shaken or troubled, for he had clarified the events before.
3. But as is so often true, church members, even the best of them, forget so much teaching.
4. It is a shame and a great fault of church members to forget what they have been taught.
5. Paul chose to remind them of previous verbal instruction to keep his letter from further inciting the people or government against them for sedition or treason (Acts 17:5-9).

2:6 They also knew the withholding presence that was keeping the Man of Sin from power.

1. They did not know now, because he had just explained in this epistle, but in person.
2. There was a present obstacle to the son of perdition coming, and they knew what it was.
3. Paul knew it; they knew he; he had verbally told them; but he would not write about it.
4. There was particular timing, foretold by Daniel, of the coming of the Man of Sin.

5. Paul is intentionally vague about this restraining power due to political considerations.
 - a. The restraining power was pagan Rome and the full authority of the emperors.
 - b. When the western empire was overrun, the bishop of Rome filled the vacuum.
 - c. The little horn would not grow until the ten horns had grown out of the empire.
 - d. To protect them from charges of sedition or treason, Paul is vague about Rome.
 - e. Remember, the church had been falsely accused of these crimes (Acts 17:6-8).
 - f. Both Jesus and Pilate had been accused of such by Jews (Luke 23:2; Jn 19:12).
 - g. Paul had told them everything in person, and he expected them to remember.
 - h. The Whore of the Roman Church rode the pagan empire to her place of power.
 - i. Our ancient brethren prayed for Rome to endure to slow their enemy's coming.
 - j. If this was the Holy Spirit, why didn't Paul just plainly state it to be Him!
 - k. If this was the Holy Spirit, how will the 144,000 special missionaries be so successful without His aid? Because this and other fables are lies of hell!

2:7 The devilish spirit of the coming mystery church was being restrained by the emperors.

1. John states in his warnings of Antichrist that His spirit was already at work (2:28; 4:3).
2. And Paul's description of the coming apostasy described devilish spirits (I Tim 4:1-3).
3. John sees a great red dragon, indicative of pagan Rome by the crowns on the seven heads of pagan Rome, seeking and taking the lives of the saints (Rev 12:3,11,17).
4. There is no confusion about the mystery – a church of Christ gone crazy (Rev 17:5).
5. The old English "let" once meant to hinder or restrain, as it does here so obviously.
 - a. **Let.** To hinder, prevent, obstruct, stand in the way of (a person, thing, etc.).
 - b. This "letting" is the same as the withholding we have already considered (2:7).
 - c. "What" must be the pagan Roman government; "he" the emperors themselves.
6. If this were the Holy Spirit as the Futurists claim, why didn't Paul just say it was Him!

2:8 The Wicked man of sin would come after the Caesars, to be destroyed at Christ's coming.

1. When the restraining presence of pagan Roman government was gone, Antichrist came.
2. The Wicked son of perdition would then be clearly seen as a new head of Rome itself.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ would consume this wicked enemy by the Spirit of His mouth.
 - a. Let us remember that the little horn was to have his dominion taken and be consumed before his final destruction, according to Daniel (Dan 7:26).
 - b. If so, we understand the preaching of Christ's gospel to have consumed him.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ will destroy this wicked enemy by the brightness of His coming.
 - a. The personal appearing of Christ will include the final judgment of all enemies.
 - b. He will cast the beast, the devil, angels, and wicked men into the Lake of Fire.

2:9 The popes came to office by the work of Satan with his power, signs, and lying wonders.

1. This singular man is the Man of Sin, the collective name for all the popes of Rome.
2. Satan is able to work wonders by his power, when the Lord allows him leave to do so.
3. Satan is involved in the governments of the world, and the Lord gave him Rome.
4. Don't forget the "princes" of Persia and Greece in Daniel as devils (Dan 10:13,20).

2:10 The Roman Church is generally people going to hell, who rejected the truth of the gospel.

1. The exceptions are noted and called out of that abominable mother church (Rev 18:4).
2. It is a very deceptive counterfeit of the true church with great delusionary appeal.
3. When men reject the truth that can save them, God is just and holy to damn them in lies.

- 2:11 It is the righteous judgment of God to send delusion and lies to those who reject His truth.**
1. God has revealed Himself with great clarity in creation, so that men are without excuse.
 2. God has revealed Himself with great clarity in scripture, so that men are without excuse.
 3. When men reject truth, it is no injustice on the part of God to send them believable lies.
 4. Ahab rejected God's word by Micaiah, so God sent a lying spirit to lead him to death.
 5. The importance of believing all the truth of Scripture cannot be emphasized too much.
- 2:12 It is God's holy purpose to damn all those who do not love the truth, but love wickedness.**
1. If we consider angels, no one accuses God for damning Satan for his proud rebellion.
 2. It is a law of Scripture that God planned the damnation of some (Pr 16:4; Rom 9:22).
- 2:13 Election and its consequences of regeneration and conversion are worthy of thanksgiving.**
1. See the extensive sermon outline "What If Election Is True?" dated December 30, 2001.
 2. The salvation predominantly under consideration here is from the delusions of Rome, for we want to understand Paul in his context of the strong delusions and lies of Satan.
 3. It is election – God's choice - that delivers us from Satan and the lies of false religion.
 4. The sanctification of the Spirit is that washing of regeneration that gives us new hearts.
 5. Belief of the truth must follow regeneration and is brought forth by gospel preaching.
 6. No man is able to deliver his own soul from lies – only the Lord can do it (Is 44:18-20).
 7. If God chose to save you from your own folly, then we are bound to thank Him always.
- 2:14 God saves men gloriously from lies by the faithful preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
1. Truth is conveyed by preaching, and believing it saves us from the many lies of men.
 2. The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ – all the glorious things about Him and associated with Him – become ours through believing and obeying the truth of the gospel.
- 2:15 After considering the Man of Sin, our duty is to hold apostolic doctrine and practice fast.**
1. Here is an important conclusion shown by "therefore." What is the therefore there for?
 2. Standing fast is the exact opposite of the falling away Paul warned about earlier (2:3).
 3. God's saints do believe and hold traditions – the inspired traditions of the apostles!
 4. Paul didn't care if they had learned them by the preached word or the written word.
 5. Our great salvation from Roman delusions, though they be lying signs and wonders by the power of Satan, is to be unmoved from apostolic doctrine and practice.
 6. Even in the New Testament we can witness many departures from the apostolic faith.
 - a. The church at Corinth harbored a fornicator and taught the resurrection was past.
 - b. The Galatians believed and taught that grace and circumcision worked together.
 - c. The church at Thyatira had a woman preacher, Jezebel, who taught fornication.
 7. It did not take long before many departures took place in the churches of the apostles.
 - a. The temptation to mix elements of Judaism and paganism was often too much.
 - b. Exalting bishops, dead ritualism, decorative churches, carnal living, and infant rites were soon adopted. All of which were contrary to plain apostolic tradition.
- 2:16 Paul personally comforts them with God and Christ and their everlasting hope in heaven.**
1. Notice the personal blessing of Jesus Christ "Himself" by which Paul encouraged them.
 2. There are two things dear about God here – He is our Father, and He loves us. Glory!
 3. Though we might be troubled here, there is everlasting consolation coming. Hope in it!
 4. And it is all, from election in the beginning to consolation in the end, by God's grace!

2:17 Comforted by the gospel, it is our duty to seek every good word and work in our lives.

1. There is so much comfort in these first two chapters, surely we can live for Him.
2. Living for Him is to seek godly perfection in both word and work – speech and action.
3. Yet both of these blessings we must admit again and further are by the grace of God.

Application: The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is at hand for us and should provoke zeal.

1. We must reject the fanciful speculations and heretical order of the futurists and their rapture.
2. We must recognize the Papacy and the RCC as the great enemy of God and His people.
3. We must deny, reject, and oppose all the abominations of that monstrosity of Babylonian lies.
4. We are bound to be thankful for the great salvation God has wrought in our lives by His choice.
5. We must be faithful and loyal to all the truth we have learned in opposition to the Man of Sin.
6. We must be faithful and loyal to all the truth we have learned in light of our Lord's coming.
7. We must take comfort that great and everlasting glory and consolation is coming for His saints.
8. We must consider that the Lord Jesus Christ could come at anytime in our generation! Paul would not tell us that the day of Christ was not at hand!

Conclusion:

1. *This interpretation of II Thess 2, the Man of Sin, and the restraining power were once well known.*
2. *All the Futurists have practically accepted the mark of the beast by allowing the popes to escape.*
3. *Two excellent books covering these and related subjects are Ralph Woodrow's "Great Prophecies of the Bible" and "Babylon Mystery Religion," in their original editions.*
4. *See also the two outlines, "A Sample of the Historical Interpretation of Antichrist" and "A Sample of the Historical Interpretation of II Thessalonians 2:5-7."*
5. *See also the study outline for Daniel 7, dated October 16, 2002, which is very valuable as a foundation.*
6. *God has been merciful in saving you from the Antichrist, what are you doing to live for Him? Let us rejoice and give thanks to God our Father, Who loved us and chose us for everlasting consolation!*
7. *Are you as committed to holding fast the truth as were the martyrs who were persecuted by the Whore?*

For a view of the bishop's seat in Rome – or Peter's highchair – from which the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*:

<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/citta/Bvlc-Baldachino.jpg>

<http://www.omm.org/images/chair-of-st-peter-large.jpg>