

Concerning the Parousia & Our Gathering Together to Him: 2 Thes 2:1–12

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INTRODUCTION

REVIEW

Paul, Sylvanus & Timothy extend the Thessalonians grace & peace from the Father & Christ (1:1–2)

Paul finds himself appropriately compelled to thank God for the Thessalonians because their faith is growing and their mutual love for one another is spreading, resulting in Paul boasting of them among the churches regarding their patience & faith in persecutions & trials (which evidence God's righteous judgment); Paul prays that God would count them worthy of His (millennial) kingdom, for which they suffer; the reason that their patience in trials evidences God's righteous judgment is because it is right for God to afflict those who trouble the Thessalonians (by righteously judging those who neither know God nor obey Christ's good-news message w/ everlasting destruction away from the Lord's presence & away from the glory of His power) & to give the troubled Thessalonian believers rest (along with Paul [& other believers]) when Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (second advent), when He comes in His second Advent to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all who believe (including the Thessalonians that they believed Paul's testimony of Christ) (1:3–10)

In light of the Thessalonians patience & faith in persecution & trials] Paul prays that God would count them worthy of His calling [e.g., rewardable] & would accomplish His purpose w/ regard to goodness [in their lives] and them using the content that they believe so that Christ may be glorified in them (& they may partake of that glory) according to the grace of the Father & the Son (1:11–12)

NEW EXPOSITION

(2:1–2) In regard to the *parousia* & being gathered together w/ Christ, the Thessalonians should not become troubled by false revelation that the day of Christ had come

The Majority Text reads *Day of Christ*. The Egyptian mss read *Day of the Lord*.

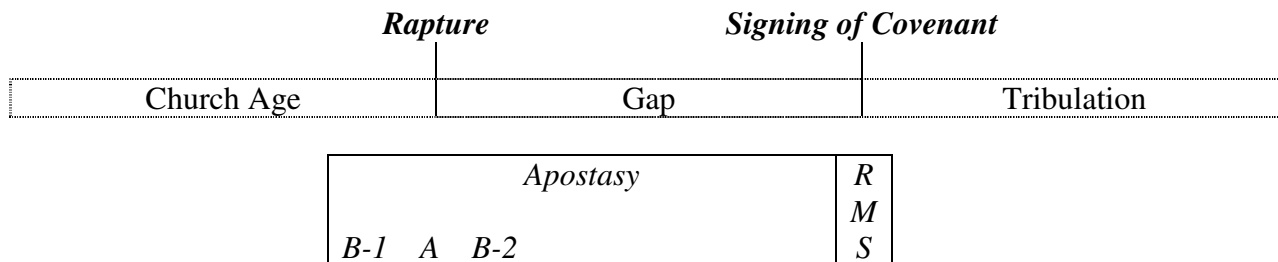
We must differentiate *the Day of Christ* from *the Day of the Lord*.

The Day of the Lord comes without warning. Cf. 1 Thess 5:2.

The Day of Christ comes after *the apostasy & the revelation of the man of sin*.

With regard to the possibility that they received a forged letter, note 2 Thess 3:17

(2:3) They were to avoid being deceived into thinking that the Day of Christ had come (because neither (1) *the apostasy* nor (2) *the revelation of the man of sin* had occurred).



1. What is the *apostasia* (*apostasy* or *falling away* or *departure*)?

A. Some take it as a reference to the rapture. That would be a simple solution. It would say that *the Day of Christ* cannot begin unless the rapture (departure) happens first. Although attractive, it lacks persuasiveness. All who reject the pre-trib rapture scoff at this view for apostasia. If our objective is to persuade, we should consider the other options.

B. I take it as the church or the world (universally) standing in darkness, opposed to God's truth.

B-1. If it is the church, then it would refer to a time (during the Church Age) where almost all believers reject the truth. Paul may have our day in mind, as being very different from the first century. If so, he does not say how long this apostasy would continue. (In other words, we would not be able to deduce a prophetic timetable).

B-2. If it refers to the world (right after the rapture, during the gap), it would refer to planet earth when no believers will be on earth and earth will be 100% opposed to God.

My preference is for B-2, but B-1 or A could possibly be correct. Please note that each of these views of it perceives the apostasia happening before the Trib.

2. When is the man of sin revealed?

He is revealed to the world as the man of sin, when the covenant is signed.

Cf. Daniel 9:24–27.

(2:4) The man of sin opposes God and exults himself above anything called God or that is worshipped and will sit in the temple of God (in Jerusalem) in an effort to prove that he is God.

Verse 3 focused on the man of sin becoming identifiable (the initial revelation at the start of the Trib), while verse 4 focuses on what he will do (at the midpoint of the 7 years)

This is the Abomination of Desolation (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14), set up at the midpoint of the seven years (Daniel 9:27).

Sidenote: In Ezra 3:6 sacrifices were offered at the Temple, while the Temple was being rebuilt. A common objection is: *How will the Temple be ready for sacrifices (at the start of the seven years) unless it was being built during the Church Age?* Two responses:

1. Offering of sacrifices does not require that the Temple already be completed. They may offer sacrifices long before it is complete.
2. Some of the preparations for sacrificing may well occur during the gap.

2 Thess 2:5–7 is parenthetical, going into details. Verses 8–12 continue the main flow.

(2:5–7) Paul reminds them that he told them about the restrainer (who assures that the man of sin will not be revealed until the proper time, although a mystery form of lawlessness is already working in the world, but the restrainer will continue restraining until He stops restraining)

Who is the restrainer? The restrainer must be greater than Satan (who seeks to reveal the man of sin ahead of time). The only reasonable possibility is that the restrainer is God.

A further clue is present in the passage. Verse 6 uses a neuter participle (translated *what is restraining*), while verse 7 uses as masculine form (*He who restrains*). The most reasonable answer here is the Holy Spirit. *Spirit* (*pneuma* in Greek) is a neuter form, but the Holy Spirit is a person, described in masculine terms). I would argue that the Holy Spirit is the restrainer.

What is restrained? The revelation of the Man of Sin. Many incorrectly see a grocery list of things that are restrained. As such, reach a false conclusion as they see great evil in the world: They may think that restraint has ended and that we are in the Day of Christ. No, the restraint has not ended and No, we are not in the Day of Christ.

(2:8) Halfway through the tribulation, there will be a 2nd revelation of the man of sin (the lawless one), whom the Lord will destroy with a word at the brightness of His *parousia*.

(2:9–10) The Lawless one's presence (*parousia*) will show satanic power, signs, and false wonders, deceiving those who are perishing (who hate the truth that would deliver them)

(2:11–12) God (through Satan) will send a strong delusion (in the form of satanic persuasion) so unbelievers (who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in what was false) may believe the lie and be judged

CONCLUSION

The Thessalonians should not be shaken by false messages regarding the *parousia* and rapture, because they are not in the Day of Christ (which must be preceded by the *apostasia* and the revelation of the Man of Sin, whom the Holy Spirit restrains, until His restraint is removed (at the Rapture), so the Man of Sin will be revealed at the right time and briefly exalt himself in the Temple as God (persuading with strong delusion many unbelievers who will perish), before Christ destroys Him at the second advent