

**The Coming Antichrist**  
**2 Thessalonians 2:1-5**  
**Part One**

We are now coming to **2 Thessalonians 2**. **Chapter one** was written in order to encourage the Thessalonian church in the midst of their persecutions. **Chapter two** was written in order to correct their confusion. In what way were they confused? They were confused about the end times. They were led to believe by Paul in his earlier instructions to them that they would be raptured before the coming of a future period of divine judgment known as the “Day of the Lord.” But apparently, since his earlier instruction there were those who had come and attempted to deceive them by some form of written communication supposedly written by Paul which stated that they were already in the Day of the Lord. Because they were undergoing such severe persecutions for their faith, some of them were led to believe that this was in fact right and that somehow they had either missed the rapture or they had been mistaken about the timing of the rapture. Paul is writing to correct the damage that had been done by this fraudulent letter.

What is very interesting is the fact that Paul does not revisit the areas of doctrine that he had already delivered to them in his first epistle. He does not go back to the doctrine of the rapture which he had discussed in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and reiterate for them the fact that they had been assured of being a part of the rapture. And neither does he go back **1 Thessalonians 5** and reassure them that God had not destined them for wrath. Rather, Paul goes to a totally new arena of argumentation.

Let us read these five verses. **“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, (2) that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. (3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?”** Paul wanted to reassure them that they were not in the Day of the Lord. He does this by saying that a certain individual who triggers the Day of the Lord has not yet come. That certain individual is commonly referred to by theologians as the antichrist. The antichrist is necessary to trigger the day of the Lord. Because this individual is so important to Paul’s argument, I would like this morning to take some time to talk about him.

He will be the most fiendish, the most wicked, the most destructive person to ever walk the earth. He will be the culmination of all those who hate God and who hate Jesus Christ. **Verse 3** introduces him under the title “the man of lawlessness” and later in the same verse refers to him as “the son of destruction.” In **verse 8** he is referred to as the lawless one. And in **verse 9** it says, **“the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan.”**

All of these titles are referring to the same person. All of these titles are referring to the person that we have come to know as the “antichrist.” He is a singular individual who will one day appear on the earthly stage. But even so, the spirit of antichrist is present in the world today.

In **1 John 2:18** it says, “**Children, it is the last hour** (by this he means the messianic era); **and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.**” There is a culminating individual, but until that time, there will be many who has his spirit. Who might be an example of this?

We do not have to look to far to find an answer to this question. Look at **verse 22**, “**Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.**” Those who would deny that Jesus is the Christ or the messiah or who would deny the shared essence of the Father and the Son would be an example of someone who has the spirit of the antichrist.

In **1 John 4:3** it says, “**every spirit who does not confess Jesus, is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist.**” The antichrist is an individual, while hating Christ will represent himself as being the Christ. But until he comes there are many like him who have his spirit.

In **2 John 7** it says, “**For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.**” While there is one culminating individual, there are many antichrists, many with the spirit of the antichrist who have been with us throughout the centuries. The one who comes in final form will be far worse than any other. He will be far worse than the worst of men.

The term antichrist (ANTICHRISTOS) means that he is against Christ. The coming antichrist is against Christ and wants to put himself in the place of Christ. But even though there is a future individual that will come into this world that will be called the antichrist, the spirit of antichrist is already here. Since the fall there has been widespread activity in this world being conducted by the forerunners of the coming antichrist.

We see this spirit, the spirit of antichrist, at work all the way back to **Genesis 6**. This is where certain fallen angels who had sexual encounters with humans. It appears to be an attempt by Satan to establish a demon race that would be unredeemable through Christ’s atoning work on the cross. Ultimately, God solved the problem when he buried this world in a great flood saving only Noah and his immediate family.

We see the spirit of antichrist at work again in the book of **Exodus** through Pharaoh when the Jewish people were enslaved in Egypt. At this time in the history, all the Jewish people were isolated in this one country. When the orders were given to the Egyptian midwives to kill all the newborn male babies, it became a threat to the messianic line.

Later we see another Satanic action that was directed at the destruction of the messianic line. After Jehoram, the seventh king of the Davidic dynasty, was killed his wife Athaliah sought to execute all of his descendants. Her attempt failed when Joash, a grandson, was successfully

hidden. If she had succeeded it would have effectively cut off the kingly line through which the messiah was to come.

Then we see another attempt by Satan to wipe out the Jews in the time of Persian king Xerxes when the Lord saved the Jewish people through Esther.

Then there was Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian king who during the intertestament period also attempted to exterminate the Jews.

Then there was Herod who sought to cut off the messiah by killing all the male babies two years and younger in the area around Bethlehem.

Then in **Matthew 4** we see another attempt by Satan to derail Christ in the wilderness temptations.

Then came the people of Nazareth who tried to shove him off a cliff.

Then came Peter who expressed his opposition to Christ's plan to die. And what did Jesus say to him? **"Get thee behind me Satan."**

The antichrist is coming. An incredibly evil individual will oppose Christ and will seek to put himself into position as king and the one to be worshiped. But we need to understand that many antichrists have preceded him. Granted, they have not been as formidable as he will be, but they possessed his spirit. The spirit of antichrist has been operating a long time. Take all of this and condense it into one individual and you will have the antichrist.

Paul in this passage wants the Thessalonians to understand that the Day of the Lord, this time of future wrath, will not come until the antichrist has made his presence known. In fact, what we discover is that the Antichrist is a very important person in actually triggering the Day of the Lord.

The seventy weeks of Daniel is a foundational passage in understanding the person and work of the Antichrist. In **Daniel 9:24-27** we learn a great deal about this person. So let us take some time to consider this very important passage. Daniel when he wrote this Old Testament book was in Babylonian captivity. He is asking God to finish His work with Israel and restore them. Then he waits for an answer and the answer comes through Gabriel. "Not only will I give you what I will do now, but also do throughout time."

Let us read **V. 24, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city."** These are not weeks of days but rather weeks of years. In other words, we give to Daniel a 490 year slice of Jewish history.

During this time period two sets of three things will happen. **"To finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity"** are all things related to Christ's first coming. These are all events related to that time period when Jesus took on a human body and

then offered up that body for make atonement for our sins. The next three things that are mentioned: **“to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.”** These three have to do with Christ’s second coming when He establishes the millennial kingdom and fulfills the promises made to the nation of Israel.

All of this is going to be accomplished in 490 years. You might say, “how can this be? It has been 490 years already.” So we need to go on. Let us look at **V. 25, “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”** The Lord is giving a very specific timetable.

When does the clock start ticking? With a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. And when was that given? King Artaxerxes gave this decree according to **Nehemiah 2** on March 5, 444 BC. From this date, 7 weeks and 62 weeks would follow until Messiah came. In other words, there would be 69 weeks of years.

Why split it up? Why not just say 69 weeks? 7 weeks would be how many years? 49 years. That takes us to 396 BC. What happened during this time? That is how long it took to rebuild Jerusalem.

In addition to this there will be 62 more weeks. This is a total of 69 weeks or 483 years and then what do you have? The Messiah, the prince! The Jews calculated their years with 360 days. So if we multiply 483 times 360 we get 173,880 days until the arrival of the Messiah from the day of the decree by Artaxerxes. If the decree was made on March 5, 444 BC, which is a historical fact, then this means that Jesus would be presenting himself as Israel’s king in the triumphal entry on March 30, AD 33, which was Palm Sunday.

This is spectacular prophecy but there is still something dangling here. And what is that? There is another week. Look at **V. 26, “Then after the sixty-two (and of course the 7 weeks) the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”** This verse tells us that after the 69 weeks the Messiah will be cut off. How long did it take after He presented Himself for this to happen? 5 days. What a tragedy. After all this expectation He is executed as a common criminal and He has nothing. But the verse does not stop there. It says, **“and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary and its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”** Was the city and the sanctuary destroyed? The answer is yes. Following the crucifixion of Jesus, the Romans under the leadership of Titus, leveled Jerusalem and the temple just like Daniel was told.

Notice these events follow the 69 weeks. They are not part of the 69 weeks. Then let us ask ourselves the question, “are they apart of the 70th week?” And the answer would have to be no. The 70<sup>th</sup> week starts when the prince in **V. 26** arrives on the scene with a peace treaty. We see this in **V. 27**. Let us read the verse, **“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and**

**on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”** The 69 weeks of Daniel’s prophecy have been fulfilled to the day. Has the 70th week been fulfilled? The answer is no. The 70<sup>th</sup> week will not start until the antichrist makes a firm covenant with the many. Once that covenant is made, we are once more on a countdown in respect to Jewish history.

Today Jewish history, in respect to God's redemptive plan for the nation of Israel, is on hold. It is on hold because they have rejected their Savior. But though they have rejected him, God remains faithful and once again He will turn His attention to the Jews and to the Jewish nation. After the rapture of the church and the revealing of the antichrist, they will once again be the people the Lord will primarily work through in order to bring about His purposes for this world.

The Thessalonians were taught by Paul that they would not enter the Day of Lord, a time when God would deal in wrath with this world and the wicked. He is now reassuring them that this is in fact the fact. He does not go back to the truths that he had shared with them in the first epistle. Rather, he is appealing to what they already knew about the antichrist and reasons with them from their past knowledge. He will add in the verses that we are studying that it is impossible for the Day of the Lord to come until the antichrist has been revealed and certain events associated with him are revealed.

## CONCLUSION

We will examine prophetic passages over the next several weeks. I would hope that in light of what we will study, we will pay greater attention to the way we are living in light of future things that are quickly approaching us. May we found ready!