

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

We are examining **2 Thessalonians 2:1-5**. Let us read these 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. (5) Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?”** Within these verses a particular individual is very prominent. He is called in **V. 3** **“the man of lawlessness”** and the **“son of destruction.”** This individual is most commonly referred to as the antichrist. He will be against God and against Christ. He will be the ultimate and final blasphemer. He will attempt to obliterate the worship of God and all who worship God while he himself seeks the homage of the world.

Last week we tried to find out a little bit more about the antichrist by looking at **Daniel 9:24-27**. There we found that he would be responsible for making a covenant with the many at the beginning of 70th week of Daniel or in other words at the beginning of that future period of time that we know as the tribulation. We are then told that in the middle of that week he would break the covenant he had made and bring all sacrifices and offerings in the temple to an end. It is at this midway point in the period of the tribulation that the troubles of this particular time greatly increase. The antichrist will wreak havoc in the world for the next 3 1/2 years until he himself is completely destroyed by Christ Himself.

We not only have **Dan. 9:24-27** that gives us information concerning the future coming blasphemer known as the antichrist, but we also have several other passages in **Daniel** that help us out. In **Daniel 7** the antichrist is referred to as the “little horn.” This so-called “little horn” emerges from a confederation of 10 different kings which are in some way connected to the former Roman empire. The antichrist apparently ascends to prominence in this confederation by force, uprooting three separate nations within this confederation. He is described as having a mouth that was uttering great boasts in **V. 7**. Later in the chapter we see him **“speaking out against the most high.”** **V. 21** tells us that he will wage war with the saints and overpower them. In **V. 25** it tells us, **“he will make alterations in times and laws.”** The reference to **“times”** very likely refers to various celebrations. Why is this significant? In various countries of the world the major celebrations tend to be religious celebrations. The antichrist in **Daniel 7**, it would appear, alters or changes those celebrations. I would assume that he does away with them. Think of that. He would do away with Christmas and Easter. He will not only change the “celebrations” but also the laws. Certainly we know from the book of Revelation, he will require that people take on his mark showing allegiance to him if they are going to buy or sell.

How long will this onslaught against the righteous and his heavy-handed tactics last, according

to this passage? **V. 25** says this specific period of time will be for “**a time, times, and half a time.**” Most people believe that “**a time**” would refer to a year. And “**times**” would be twice that or two years. And then of course half a time would refer to a half a year. This would mean that the period of time that Daniel has in mind would be the last half of the 70th week of Daniel and would be a total of 3.5 years.

The antichrist is also mentioned in **Daniel 8. V. 23** describes him as insolent and skilled in intrigue. **V. 24** tells us that “**his power will be mighty but not by his own power.**” The obvious question is, “If he is not exercising his own power then whose power is he exercising?” **Revelation 13:2** tells us that his power comes from Satan himself. **V. 24** also tells us that he will destroy to “**an extraordinary degree.**”

**Daniel 11** also speaks of the antichrist. We learn from **V. 36** that he, as a world dictator, will do whatever he pleases. He will exalt himself above every god, he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods. In **V. 37** it tells us that he will have no desire for women. What will his desire be for? His desire is for war. And he pours huge sums of money into creating a war machine.

Could such a man exist? Of course he could and he is coming. But now let us go back again and ask ourselves the question: Why does Paul introduce the antichrist to us here in **2 Thess**? He is attempting to clear up a matter of confusion. Paul apparently had shared with them that they would be gathered together with Christ before a future cataclysmic judgment by God known as the Day of the Lord. This particular day, I believe, starts to unfold when the tribulation begins, which **Matt. 24** describes as the beginning of birth pangs. But the beginning of the birth pangs is not the birth. The birth of the Day of the Lord does not take place until the midpoint of the tribulation. It culminates with the coming of Christ at the very end of the tribulation and the destruction of the heavens and earth at the end of the Millennium. This is recorded for us in **2 Peter 3:10** where it says, “**the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.**”

When a certain individual came to them and asserted that they were now in the Day of the Lord they were disturbed. Let us look again at **VV. 1-2**, “**Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together with 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.**” What is interesting to note is the fact that if these Thessalonians had been taught that the rapture would occur after the day of the Lord, they would not be upset but rather be rejoicing knowing that Jesus would be shortly returning to catch them up to be with Him. But rather than rejoicing they panicked. They became disturbed. The Thessalonians had clearly been taught that they would be caught up to be with Christ before the Day of the Lord. This new but fraudulent teaching was totally contradictory to what they had been taught. But apparently some of them had believed this report and they were confused. Had they missed the rapture? Were they even saved? Was the gospel of Christ able to deliver them from the wrath to come?

Paul is writing to these Thessalonians in order to remove their fear. The person and work of the

antichrist was very much at the center of his argument. In these five verses we will see five things they needed to avoid if they were not going to be fearful.

### AVOID DECEPTION

The cause of their disturbance was that someone had come along and deceived them. Apparently someone had come into their fellowship with a supposed letter from Paul saying that the Spirit had given him a message that he was now sending to them. The message was very simple but startling. It stated that they were now in the Day of the Lord.

This message was not true. The Thessalonians were not in the Day of the Lord. There is always someone who is offering another take on the end of the world. Certainly Jesus understood this and warns us in **Matt. 24:4** and **Mark 13:5** about those who would come to mislead us about the end times.

There is always imminent danger of deception in the church. Satan is disguised as an angel of light and his ministers are disguised as angels of light. If the Thessalonians were not going to be fearful they needed to be more careful not to be deceived.

### AVOID FORGETFULNESS

Look at **V. 5**, “**Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?**” He had been telling them things about the coming of the Lord and our gathering to him. He had been telling them about “the apostasy” which he refers to. He had been telling them about the coming “man of lawlessness” and “son of destruction.” He had been talking to them about all these things. Paul, when he was with the Thessalonians, repeatedly was telling them about these kinds of things.

They were baby Christians but Paul felt it important to share with them information about future things. What is interesting is the fact that Paul must have thought a basic understanding of future things was important foundational truth. And he apparently had told them something that they must have forgotten.

What was that? He had told them that the Day of the Lord would not come unless something else had come first. And what was this specific thing? Look at **V. 3**, “**Let no one deceive you, for it (the day of the Lord) will not come unless the apostasy comes first.**” The day of the Lord could not show up at any time. It cannot come until “the apostasy.”

Apostasy (APOSTASIA) can be understood as a defection or revolt. In **Joshua 22:22**, in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT, it is translated in this way. An apostate abandons or rebels against a position that was once professed. This is religious defection. What is he saying here? He is saying that the day of the Lord cannot come until the revolt or rebellion has come.

Certainly apostasy has been with us since the early church. You might remember **1 John 2:18** which I referred to last week. “**Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that**

**the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.**” But the passage does not end there it goes on to **V. 19, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for it they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.”** These were apostates. There has always been apostasy in this world. Certainly **2 Thess. 2:3** is not referring to this but to something much more than this. Something that was not present, but something that was to come.

Perhaps it is referring to the increasing apostasy in our present age that is spoken of in **2 Timothy 4:3-4, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves, teachers in accordance to their own desires; (4) and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.”** Certainly this is a possibility, but I don’t think this is what he is talking about. Both the departure by those that John witnessed and that which Paul spoke of in **2 Tim. 4** are departures that take place over time: a general departing or revolting. This is not what Paul has in mind in **2 Thess. 3**. It is not saying that the day of the Lord will not come until apostasy comes but “the” apostasy comes. The apostasy is an event not a general flow of the times. Paul appears to be speaking of the ultimate apostasy.

How do we know what that might be? Just continue to read the verse. **“Let no one deceive you, for it (the day of the Lord) will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed.”** The apostasy that is yet future is associated with what person? The antichrist. Paul is telling us that the day of the Lord cannot come until the antichrist is revealed. If he is being revealed, this means that before this point he was veiled. Veiled in what sense? Would the revealing be his future birth? Or will it be when he becomes prominent on the earthly scene, or will it be when he signs the covenant with the many as we saw in Daniel 9? No, none of these. We see the revealing in **V. 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 God.”** What event is this describing? The abomination of the desolation that Daniel spoke about. This is the apostasy, for this is when the antichrist is revealed. And the day of the Lord cannot be given birth until the antichrist and his true nature becomes evident to the world at the time of the apostasy.

Paul describes the antichrist. This future person will be revealed by two phrases. He refers to him as **“the man of lawlessness”** and the **“son of destruction.”**

What is Paul communicating to us when he refers to the antichrist as “the man of lawlessness?” He is the very embodiment of lawlessness. In **1 John 3:4** it says that **“sin is lawlessness.”** If this is so then we can say that the antichrist is the man of sin. He is the very embodiment of sin. He is, in the human sphere, the consummate sinner. He is sin incarnate.

He is also called the “son of destruction.” Look again at **V. 3, “Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the day of the Lord) will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.”** The son of destruction could be understood the man doomed to destruction. This title marks his certain doom. As a son falls under the power

and domination of his father, so the son of destruction, the antichrist, will fall under the power and domination of his future certain judgment.

The antichrist, when the tribulation begins, is seen as a good guy. But he isn't. People see him as the man in a white hat. But he isn't. He is the personification of evil. He is the man of lawlessness. People see him as a person who will lead them and the world to good things. But he is the son of destruction. Paul is telling us that the Day of the Lord cannot come until the antichrist, the man of lawlessness and the son of destruction, is revealed at the mid point of the tribulation.

## CONCLUSION

The Thessalonians were being led to believe that they were in the day of the Lord. They had become fearful. In an attempt to minister to them, Paul tells them they need to avoid being deceived. And he tells them they need to avoid being forgetful.

They could not be in the day of the Lord because he had told them that the day of the Lord would not begin until the apostasy, which is the abomination of desolation, had taken place. That event is when the antichrist sets aside all the sacrifices being offered in the temple and sets himself up as god and will demand that he be worshiped.

Since the Thessalonians had not seen such an event, nor would they ever see such an event, they needed to be assured that they were not in the day of the Lord. They were to continue to look for the coming of Christ and their gathering together with Him.