

2 Thes. 2:1-12

I. We are asking you not to believe falsehood about the Day of the Lord (1-2)

Don't be discouraged by false ideas that the Day of the Lord has already come

A. We are requesting you, brothers (1)

1. Concerning the *parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ

Parousia means "presence" in the sense of "showing up"

It became a technical term for the "Messianic Advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age" BDAG

2. And concerning our gathering together to Him

Both of these topics were described in the previous section

B. Purpose: that you won't be shocked by a false report about the Day of the Lord (2)

1. In order that you would not be disturbed or frightened by a false report (2a-b)

a In order that you would not be so easily disturbed/shaken from your mindset/attitude (2a)

b Neither would you be shocked/alarmed either through a spirit or word or epistle as from us (2b)

Apparently they had received a false report from somewhere and thought it had originated with Paul

Notice that below Paul told them he had already told them differently – they should have tested new information against revelation they already had – test the spirits

2. As that the Day of the Lord had come (2c)

The Day of the Lord was/is the climactic next step in God's plan, when He will decisively bring to a close this age, vindicate His righteousness, punish His enemies, and begin the next age
How could the Thessalonians possibly believe this had already happened?

There was an idea current in this time (now called "over-realized eschatology"), based on the Platonic separation of the 'spiritual' and 'physical' realms. This taught that the purely spiritual Kingdom of God was already completely present in the lives of believers through a purely spiritual Day of the Lord, which had no impact on the physical realm. Paul was battling against this idea in Corinth as well.

Paul deals with this mistaken idea by talking about the impact that Christ's *parousia* will have on real life history.

II. Specifically: Don't be deceived, but remember the truth that you know (3-12)

A. Neg: Don't be deceived about the coming of the Day of the Lord (3-4)

1. Do not let anyone deceive you in any way (3a)

2. Reason: Because the Day of the Lord will not come until after the apostasy and deception of pretend deity (3b-4)

a Because [The day of the Lord will not come] (3b)

b Condition: Until after the apostasy and false pretender to deity comes first (3c-4)

1) Except the apostasy comes first (3c)

2) And the man of lawlessness, an arrogant pretender to deity, is revealed (3d-4)

a) And the man of lawlessness is revealed – the son of destruction (3d)

b) Specifically: He exalts himself as a god against the true God (4)

- (1) He exalts himself in opposition against any deity (4a-b)
 - (a) The one opposing (4a)
 - (b) And exalting himself against everything being called a god or an object of worship (4b)

He hates God because he wants to be God

-cf. Dan. 7:25, 11:36 fulfilled by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), but also fulfilled in many world leaders since, cf. Rev. 13:6

- (2) Result: He would present himself in the temple as God [to be worshipped] (4c-e)
 - (a) So that he would sit [as an authority] in the temple of God (4c)
 - (b) Claiming to be God (4d-e)
 - (i) Declaring/advertising himself (4d)
 - (ii) That he is God (4e)

The epitome of human rebellion/sin – rejecting God because we want to replace Him as King of our universe

We all do this in our heart; the man of lawlessness does this publicly on a grand scale – the true manifestation of our rebellion for what it is

B. Pos: You already know enough to resist the deception (5-12)

- 1. You've already been told about the revelation of lawlessness and its destruction (5-8)

- a Don't you remember that I told you these things when I was with you? (5)

- 1) Do you not remember? (5a)
- 2) That I told you these things when I was with you (5b-c)
 - a) That I spoke these things to you (5b)
 - b) While still being present with you (5c)

- b Lawlessness will be fully displayed and destroyed under God's control (6-8)

- 1) You know that lawlessness is restrained until God's timing (6)

- a) And you know the one/thing now restraining/holding back (6a)

Something or someone is currently holding back the full expression of lawlessness

Paul does not elaborate what or who this is because the Thessalonians already know what he is talking about

The problem is that we don't know for sure what he is talking about

Beware of theological/eschatological systems built on conjecture in passages such as these which are uncertain, as if their interpretation were certain

- b) Purpose: So that he/it will be revealed in its own time (6b)

He/it is held back by God's power, and will be fully revealed by God's power/permission and only in God's timing

- 2) Reason: Lawlessness will only be fully revealed in God's timing, and then will be destroyed by Christ's appearing (7-8)
 - a) Lawlessness is active, but will only be fully revealed in God's timing (7)
 - (1) For the secret/mystery of lawlessness is already active (7a)
 - (2) The one/thing restraining him will remain until he/it is removed from them (7b-c)
 - (a) Only the one/thing restraining/holding back [will remain] still (7b)
 - (b) Until he/it is removed from their midst (7c)
Until he/it is out of the way, no longer in their midst
 - b) Then the lawless one will be revealed and then destroyed by Jesus' greatness (8)
 - (1) And then the lawless one will be revealed (8a)
 - (2) And Jesus will totally destroy him with His arrival (8b-c)
 - (a) The Lord Jesus will annihilate him with the breath of his mouth (8b)
There won't even be any effort or fight on Jesus' part
He is so powerful; He will 'blow' him away with a minimum of effort
 - (b) And He will wipe [him] out with the appearance/splendor of His arrival (8c)
The arrival and personal glory of Jesus will totally disintegrate anything which stands opposed to Him
The man of lawlessness arrogantly opposes Jesus when Jesus is graciously allowing him to do so, but stands no chance whatsoever when Jesus decides that his time is done
2. Explanation: The man of lawlessness's ministry comes with deception to those who are self-deceived (9-12)
- a) Situation: The appearance [of the man of lawlessness] is: (9-10a)
 - 1) According to the working/operation of satan
The power behind the man of lawlessness is the devil
And the devil gives him supernatural power in order to deceive
 - 2) In all kinds of false power and [false] miraculous signs and [false] astounding miracles
Not every miracle is from God
He has clearly warned us against false/counterfeit christs, false/counterfeit prophets, and false/counterfeit miracles
Be discerning and don't believe every supernatural manifestation is from God
Test everything by Scripture
 - 3) In all kinds of unrighteous deception
 - 4) To those being lost/destroyed
Those who are lost will be deceived
The implication is that those who are saved will not be deceived, cf. Matt. 24:24

- b Response: They refuse to believe the truth and God confirms their self-deception (10b-12)
 - 1) Because of this, they rejected the truth by which they would be saved (10b-c)
 - a) Because of which they do not receive/approve of the love of the truth (10b)
 - In Jesus' words, they hate the light and do not come to the light because their deeds are darkness, and they don't want them exposed for what they are
 - b) So that they may be saved (10c)
 - 2) Result: God sends them a deception so that those who love falsehood will be judged (11-12)
 - a) God sends them a deception so that they will believe the falsehood (11)
 - (1) Because of this, God sends to them a working/operation of deception (11a)
 - (2) Purpose: so that they would believe the falsehood (11b)
 - b) Purpose: So that all who do not believe the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness may be judged/condemned (12)

There are uncertainties in this passage, and we must be honest about this and not go beyond what is written in claiming more certainty than we have:

1. How they got the idea that the Day of the Lord already happened and what they thought that meant.
2. Who is this 'man of lawlessness'?
3. What/Who is the one/thing that is holding him back? And when/how will it be taken out of the way?

There are certainties in this passage, and we should clearly teach them and build any theology and application of this passage primarily on these certainties:

1. They were troubled/shaken because they thought they missed something, they were deceived in some way
2. The man of lawlessness is prideful, claiming to be God and hating all rival claims, he sets himself up as and advertises himself as God. There have been many historical examples of this kind of attitude/spirit. Just like there are many antichrists (1 Jn. 2:18) and there likely will be a figure at the end who qualifies as THE antichrist, there are many men of lawlessness throughout history, including ourselves, who will be fully revealed in THE man of lawlessness
3. Even if we don't know for sure who/what is holding him back and when/how he will be released, we know that it is all under God's control
4. Lawlessness is already at work, and we can/should resist it
5. The Lawless one will be revealed before the parousia
6. Jesus will quickly destroy him – keeping in mind for God “quickly” is a relative term, which may not meet our expectations of quickness
7. Punishment will come to those who believe the lie because they love the lie more than the truth
8. Beware false signs
9. Beware false worship