

We began 2 Thessalonians last week and ended before concluding our discussion on Verse 7 that on a cursory reading seemed to imply our rest would be when Jesus returned in flaming fire for vengeance on do not know God or do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Let start at Verse 5 to get the flow of Paul's thoughts:

(2 Thessalonians 1:5) which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

The main point here is that through His Grace we are already counted worthy **IN HIM**, having no real intrinsic worth of our own other than, perhaps, being created in His image and an object of His Love! This is so totally against our culture of "you are really a good person who, through no fault of your own, does bad things once and a while".

(2 Thessalonians 1:6) since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

God is faithful. God is righteous and can not ignore sin. His perfect righteous judgment and justice will be evident. However, like Habakkuk and David and many others throughout the centuries, we cry out "Lord, why do the wicked prevail? Why do the wicked prosper and even curse You, reject You and even scoff at You as if daring You to act?" And, "When will You repay LORD"?

There are 3 answers:

1. Would you have preferred the LORD pour out His righteous anger on **you** while you were yet a sinner? Do you think that your sin was acceptable given your circumstances?
2. He will repay in His own appointed time, not ours. He wishes that none should perish! Or is God's Grace only poured out on the "deserving"? Then, it would not be Grace! And there would be no hope for any one!
3. Do not think for a moment that today, when you sin, it is ignored, overlooked just because He loves you. Every sin **we** commit is covered by the Blood of Christ who suffered as no man should ever suffer because He bore the weight of the penalty for every sin **we** have committed and will commit! Yes, that's how much He loves us...not "loved" you but **loves** you with each breath you take and each beat of your heart!

(2 Thessalonians 1:7) **and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, (8) in flaming fire** taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) **These shall be punished** with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (10) when He comes, in that Day, **to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.**

The issue, as we began to discuss last week, is the word "WHEN". It seems to imply that the rest will only come when Jesus returns in a flaming fire to take vengeance on all God-haters. But this doesn't jive well with our understanding in a pre-tribulation rapture. So, is this the correct interpretation and therefore we must adjust our stance on the rapture?

One way to understand the verse is to put a period after the word “us”, thus separating the thoughts. It is known that there was limited use of a few punctuation marks in ancient Greek and so, some translations DO put the period in there. There’s another way to view the verse and that is by the grammatical structure.

Kenneth Wuest is a Greek scholar and has written what he calls an “expanded translation” of the New Testament. His translations can clarify what is being written:

(2 Thessalonians 1:7) (7-10) And to you who are being afflicted, there is a **(ceasing) surcease** from this stress and strain in the **relaxing anticipation of the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power** in a fire of flame, allotting full justice to those who do not know God and who do not obey the good news concerning our Lord Jesus, who are such that they shall pay the penalty of everlasting ruin and death in separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **whenever** He comes to be glorified in His saints and to be marvelled at in all those who believed, because our testimony to you was believed on that day *(that is, to all who learn of Jesus from your faithful witness in that future day; my words).*

(2 Thessalonians 1:11) **Therefore** we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, (12) that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will be counted worthy as you continue to fulfill His work of faith and power in you! Whomever the Holy Spirit brings to mind, pray for them that they might allow Christ to be glorified in this lost and dying world!

(2 Thessalonians 2:1) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, (2) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either **by spirit** or **by word** or **by letter**, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

But still, the church was confused. Many still believed that they had missed the “gathering together”, i.e., the rapture of the Body to meet with Him in the clouds and therefore now in the Tribulation.

Behind the thinking here is:

Why would they be “shaken in mind” or troubled unless they were taught that Jesus would return for the Church before the Tribulation had started? If they were taught that the rapture would take place during or even after the Tribulation, I think Paul’s message would have been different.

In verse 2:

Paul is evidently aware of the source of these ideas:

1. By spirit (false prophecies)
2. By word (false teachers)
3. By letter (false leaders)

The point being made is: unless these teachings are from us (meaning Paul and his disciples/pastors/elders/teachers), then don't believe it. AND!

And, if anyone tries to convince you otherwise, there's a great rebuttal: **"prove it"**.

I'm going to resist quoting from the NT Scriptures to support Paul's statements. Paul could only rely on the OT Scriptures, particularly the Prophets.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3) Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, (4) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Unlike the rapture which does not have any required events preceding it, His Second Coming does! Also "that Day" is not a specific day but a period of time, that is, the 7 year tribulation.

So, what are the signs/events that Paul is writing about?

1. "falling away" – there are 2 words; the first is:

apostasia

ap-os-tas-ee'-ah

defection from truth ("apostasy"): - falling away, forsake.

The above word is related to "apostasion"

ap-os-tas'-ee-on

something *separative*, that is, (specifically) *divorce*: - (writing of) divorcement.

- a. A significant/major falling away of men from the truth of the Gospel, from the purity of Gospel doctrines, discipline, worship, and ordinances; We're not talking about a small group of Jews, for example, who decide to go back under the OT law or some gentiles caught up in Gnosticism. This will perhaps be a worldwide movement to reject the Gospel of Truth and therefore Jesus as Savior.

2. The man of Sin is revealed, the son of perdition

apōleia

ap-o'-li-a

ruin or *loss* (physical, spiritual or eternal): - damnable (-nation), destruction, die, perdition, X perish, pernicious ways, waste.

- a. Daniel 7:24-25 The ten horns *are* ten kings *Who* shall arise from this kingdom. And

another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first *ones*, And shall subdue three kings. (25) **He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. (that is, 3.5 years); a “week” in the Scriptures is often a “week of years”.**

- b. Revelation 13
- c. John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; **and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**
- d. John 13:27-28 Now after the piece of bread, **Satan entered him.** Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." (28) But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him.

(2 Thessalonians 2:4) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

1. Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the **wing of abominations** shall be one who makes **desolate**, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."
 - a. Daniel described an individual person: *The prince who is to come* (Dan 9:26), the *king of fierce countenance* (Dan 8:23), the *willful king* (Dan 11:36-45). [GUZIK]
 - b. The prophet Daniel told us the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and bring sacrifice and offerings to an end; that the Antichrist will defile the temple by setting something abominable there (Dan 9:27; Dan 11:31, and Dan 12:11). [GUZIK]
2. Daniel 12:10-11 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. (11) "And from the time *that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days.
3. Matthew 24:15-21 "Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), (16) "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (17) Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. (18) And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. (19) But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! (20) And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. (21) For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

(2 Thessalonians 2:5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

Paul taught the full counsel of God and therefore taught all the OT scriptures and, it appears from these 2 letters, especially the Prophets!

(2 Thessalonians 2:6) **And now you know what is restraining**, that he may be revealed in his own time. (7)

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **He** who now restrains *will do so* until **He** is taken out of the way.

Some believe that this refers to the “removing” of the Holy Spirit. Some add that this will be when the church, “the temple of the Holy Spirit” is raptured. But, since we know that there will be “tribulation saints” who are saved, sealed, and serve God during this period (Rev 7:3-14 and Rev 14:1-5). this can’t be a removing but perhaps His restraining influence will be held back.

If we can say that even today evil is running amok, I can’t imagine what it will be like when He who restrains no longer does so!

(2 Thessalonians 2:8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, **whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.**

The “antichrist” is the lawless one. The antichrist will be under the total control of Satan. It was first used by the Apostle John in his epistles to the church about 30 years later.

The lawless one will be revealed and as Daniel was told:

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

And while the specific’s of his destruction were not totally understood (this was better understood many years later after John wrote the “Revelation of Jesus Christ”), the image of fiery judgment is well known throughout the Scriptures: The best example of this specific prophesy would be

Daniel 7:9 11, 12 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment *was* white as snow, And the hair of His head *was* like pure wool. His throne *was* a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; (11) "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its **body destroyed and given to the burning flame.** (12) As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

(2 Thessalonians 2:9) The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, (10) and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

The antichrist will, under the influence of Satan, be granted power, signs and the ability speak omens that are nothing but lies. All these things are bathed in falsehood, mere attempts to imitate and fool the foolish into believing that he is “special” and perhaps even from God or is God.

Those who did not receive the truth and salvation when it was offered them will be fed “unrighteous” or “sinful” lies and believing them, they will perish!

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet

his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

And,

Psalms 81:11-12 "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would *have* none of Me. (12) So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels.

(2 Thessalonians 2:11) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, (12) that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Instead of trying to figure out what this strong delusion is, it is obvious that those who believe the lies of Satan will be given over to those lies;

Isaiah 66:4 So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose *that* in which I do not delight."

John 3:18-20 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

(2 Thessalonians 2:13) But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, (14) to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

FACT: We give thanks to God for your salvation! You are being sanctified which is evident because of your love of the truth!

(2 Thessalonians 2:15) Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

The tense of the verbs might render this "be constantly standing firmly" and "be holding fast" to what you heard FROM US or through this and the previous letter!

(2 Thessalonians 2:16) Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, (17) comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Stand on the Rock, knowing that He loves you and is continually encouraging you by the hope of His grace, encourage your hearts and be established in all good words and deeds;

I like what Peter said:

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to

whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.