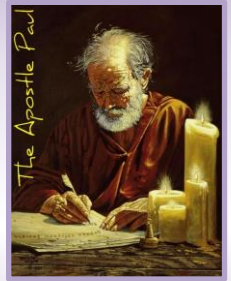


THESSALONIANS

There Is Hope!

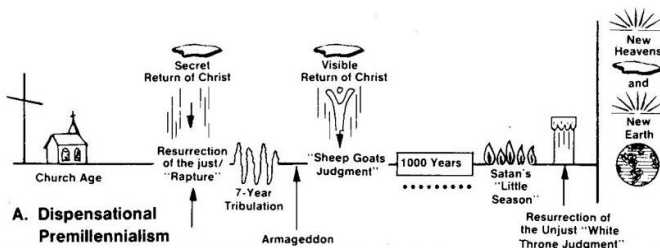


Lesson 11: Blessed Hope: Part II ... [2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12]

PREVIEW

The apostle Paul responds to a false message given to the Thessalonian believers, namely that the Day of the Lord's wrath of God - that is, the Great Tribulation period - has already started. Paul asserts that the Great Tribulation cannot begin until a special apostasy occurs and the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist) is revealed. The Antichrist will not arrive on the scene until the Restrainer no longer holds back his appearance.

PREMILLENNIAL: PRE-TRIBULATION PERSPECTIVE:



THE LOCAL DECEPTION: 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-2

In this chapter Paul addresses questions raised by his first letter, where he taught the Thessalonian believers about the catching away of the church to be with Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Apparently, a misunderstanding of Paul's teaching had caused the Thessalonians to be shaken in mind and troubled. Their fears centered on the idea that the day of Christ had already come, i.e., they were already in the Great Tribulation.

SOMETHING TO PONDER

What is the most likely eschatological position Paul taught the Thessalonians?

[Pre-Trib | Mid-Trib | Post-Trib]

Paul uses the phrase "DAY OF THE LORD" which is a traditional Jewish expression for the day when God would intervene in history to destroy His enemies and establish His Kingdom. Note the "DAY OF THE LORD" refers to a time period and not a literal day.

THE MAN OF SIN: 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-5

In verse 3 Paul gives a warning against deception. We guard against deception by knowing the truth (John 8:32; 14:6; 16:13). Paul assures the Thessalonian believers that the DAY OF THE LORD will not come until four precedent events occur, two of which are contained in verse 3; the other two in verses 4 and 7.

DAY OF THE LORD - PRECEDENT EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. The APOSTASY Must TAKE PLACE | 2:3 |
| 2. The MAN OF SIN Is REVEALED | 2:3 |
| 3. The TEMPLE Must Be REBUILT | 2:4 |
| 4. The RESTRAINER Must Be REMOVED | 2:7 |



Paul's reference to "THE FALLING AWAY" or apostasy is an end-time sign denoting the abandonment of a formerly professed position or view; a defection; a rejection of a former allegiance. Do we see this in the church today?

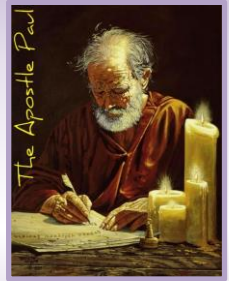
The second end-times sign Paul uses in verse 3 is "THE MAN OF SIN IS REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION". Paul's point is clear: "You are worried that we are in the Great Tribulation and that you missed the rapture. But you can know that we are not in the Great Tribulation, because we have not yet seen the man of sin revealed."

In verse 4 Paul tells us what the man of sin (Antichrist) will do. The man of sin demands worship for himself that belongs to God only (Luke 4:8). This demand for worship is also described in Revelation 13:1-6. Note the phrase "ALL THAT IS CALLED GOD", which includes every deity, not just the God of Scripture, and every non-deity that is worshipped - even "modern science".

Paul states that the Antichrist will "SIT AS GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD". The man of sin's demand for worship will be so extreme, he will set himself up as God in the temple at Jerusalem (literally the Holy of Holies - Naos),

THESSALONIANS

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Lesson 11: Blessed Hope: Part II ... [2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12]

demanding this blasphemous worship from everyone. (Revelation 13:14-15 and Matthew 24:15, 21, 29-31). This end-time sign is referred to by Daniel and Jesus as the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION.

ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11
Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14

THE MYSTERY OF SIN: 2 THESSALONIANS 2:6-12

In verse 6 Paul instructs us that Satan and the man of sin are being restrained. In verse 7 Paul uses the phrase "THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS IS ALREADY AT WORK". Notice the definite article "THE", which highlights the definite aim of Satan is to overthrow the law of God and establish his own rule; not merely disorder and violation of the law in general. MYSTERY is the unveiling or revealing of something that has been hidden up til now. LAWLESSNESS is asserting the absence of moral absolutes; relative right and wrong. Sound familiar?

Notice in verse 7 there is a time limit on the present restraint ("UNTIL HE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY"). Who is the HE referred to as the ONE RESTRAINING? The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will not leave the earth during the Great Tribulation (DAY OF THE LORD). He will be present on the earth during the Great Tribulation because many are saved, sealed, and serve God during this period (Revelation 7:3-14 and 14:1-5). This can't happen without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, not removed.

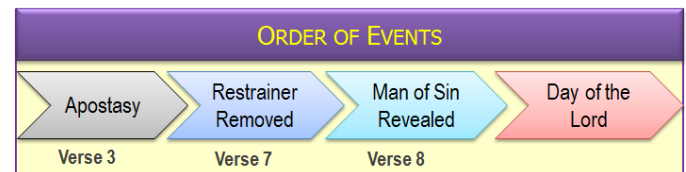
WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT NOW?

"The special presence of the Spirit as the indweller of saints will terminate abruptly at the *parousia* as it began abruptly at Pentecost. Once the body of Christ has been caught away to heaven, the Spirit's ministry will revert back to what he did for believers during the Old Testament period."

--- Thomas

The DAY OF THE LORD cannot happen while the church is still in the world.

In verse 8 Paul states TWO certain facts about the man of sin, here called the lawless one. FIRST, it is certain that the lawless one will be revealed when the Holy Spirit removes His restraint. SECOND, it is certain that the lawless one will be destroyed by the mere brightness of Jesus (Matthew 17) at His coming. The "AND THEN" clause emphatically asserts that the career of the lawless one will run its course following the removal of the Restrainer. Yet, his final doom is also affirmed.



In verse 9 it states the antichrist will come with POWER, with SIGNS and with LYING WONDERS.

COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION OF MIRACLES

POWER: Denotes the cause of the miracle - the inherent power producing it.
SIGNS: Point to the significance lying behind the miracles.
WONDERS: Indicates the abnormal nature and astonishment they produce.

In verse 10 it states the cause for those who perish lies within themselves – their rejection of God's provision.

Verses 11 and 12 articulate God's use of their choice of evil as the very instrument to punish their sin. They were first deluded, which was their sin; then God sends them strong delusion, which is their punishment (Proverbs 5:22). In the end, the Antichrist is only God's messenger. Specifically, God sends them THE LIE. This isn't just any LIE, but THE LIE, THE LIE that has enthralled the human race since Adam. This is THE LIE that God is not God and we can be gods. As God gives rebellious man THE LIE he desires, it isn't out of His generosity. No, it shows God's judgment on those who reject the truth. As Romans 1 points out, this is God giving man up to the depravity of his heart (his PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS). Willful rejection of truth has resulted in the love of evil. Evil had become their good.

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR IN THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE?