

OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF 2 THESSALONIANS – STEADFAST UNTIL THE FINAL BELL

INTRODUCTION:

I hope you were here for last Sunday's study on the First Book of Thessalonians, because this second epistle builds on that foundation. Much of the background information, the occasion and purposes for writing still apply. 2 Thessalonians fills in more of the gaps related to Paul's corrective teaching on eschatology and hammers home the responsibility not to quit working but to remain active and faithful until Christ returns.

Just to review, here is the **SEQUENCE OF EVENTS** leading up to the writing of this letter:

- Paul founded the church at Thessalonica, the capital city in Macedonia – recorded in **Acts 17**
- Only had maybe a month or a little longer to instruct them before being chased out of town (at least 3 sabbaths) – Remember, they did not have access to the same amount and depth of biblical instruction that we enjoy today – no surprise that they would be confused about some issues
- Paul went on to Berea, chased from there also by the same jealous Jews that pursued him from Thessalonica, went to Athens where he sent Timothy back to check on the church's condition
- Ended up at Corinth where Timothy returned and brought back his report
 - o Mostly good news – making progress in faith and love and hope; had a good reputation among the other churches
 - o Some problems related to confusion over what would happen to those believers who died before Christ returned; and some irresponsible pulling back from work -- related to a wrong understanding of end time events
- They also continued to need encouragement in light of ongoing persecution
- Prompted Paul to write **1 Timothy** about 51 AD from Corinth
- Now maybe 5-6 months later, Paul received additional news about some of the problems actually intensifying, so he writes a second letter from Corinth

Let's understand the **OCCASION** for writing 2 Thessalonians – Paul was addressing 3 very specific problems

- **Intensity of Persecution** – these believers needed further encouragement
 - 1 Thess. 1:6** – they had received the Word initially in the context of much tribulation
 - 1 Thess 2:13-16** – details some of the suffering they had endured – followed the pattern of the believers in Jerusalem who had endured persecution – just as Jesus had been put to death
 - 1 Thess 3:3** – Paul did not want the faith of these young believers to be disturbed by such afflictions – assured them “*we have been destined for this*”
- But the persecution just kept ramping up, so Paul writes them another letter to encourage them to Stand Fast
- 2 Thess. 1:4-5** -- *therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may*

be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

I just received a missionary letter from a church planter in India that I have been close friends with since our seminary days together – He has raised up over 100 full time workers and sees a number of new churches being started every year – He reported on the intensity of persecution especially in N. India where the Hindu Muslims are in charge and can throw believers into prison with no justification – we don't experience this here – but persecution is still a reality in other parts of the world

- **Illegitimate Doctrinal Error Regarding Eschatology** – events surrounding end times
2 Thess 2:1-4 -- *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 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. 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 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.*

Look at how Satan was promoting this false teaching and seeking to undermine the faith of the young believers:

- This false teaching was motivated by the **spirit of Antichrist** – that John wrote was already present in the first century church
1 John 2:18 -- *Children, it is the last hour; 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.*
1 John 4:1 -- *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*
- This false teaching was communicated *By a message* = **false teaching**
- This false teaching was authenticated *By a letter as if from us* -- apparently these false teachers had forged some type of letter – passing it off as being from the Apostle Paul – advocating for the false position that the believers were already in the Day of the Lord – serious business – Paul takes care at the end of this letter to authenticate that he was the actual author of 2 Thess – **2 Thess 3:17** -- *I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.*
- **Irresponsible Living** – doctrine impacts our practical conduct – **2 Thess. 3:6-16** -- some believers had stopped working because of their misunderstanding of end time events – Paul devotes this final section of the book to addressing that deviant behavior – He doesn't fully explain **Why** they had stopped working – but apparently they didn't see the point of planting crops or continuing to develop a business if the end times were upon them – this was so serious that Paul advocated **church discipline** – not for the sake of punishment but to try to restore the disobedient brethren – still treat them not as an enemy but as a brother in Christ

Those are the 3 issues that are uppermost in Paul's mind as he writes this important letter.

BIG IDEA: As Believers Anticipate The Second Coming They Must Remain Steadfast Despite:

- Affliction and Persecution
- Apostasy and Deception
- Antagonists and Undisciplined Brothers

2 Thessalonians 2:15 “so then brethren, stand firm”

OVERVIEW:

Despite clear teaching, believers can be easily confused (especially about end time scenarios) and need encouragement to remain steadfast until the Lord returns (despite many antagonists and distractions). This short epistle contains the most detail from the Apostle Paul regarding the Day of the Lord and the coming Antichrist.

Despite all of the differing views among evangelicals regarding the timing and nature of some of these events, we need to make sure we do not miss the practical impact of the reality of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The exhortation is to remain steadfast and walk worthy of our calling in every respect. False teaching and deception must be refuted as we remain secure in the providential care of our Heavenly Father who is working out His grand program for the ages. Our missionary zeal must not dim, but must be balanced with responsible, orderly living that manifests itself through a disciplined work ethic.

Most of our remaining time this morning will be focused on that Doctrinal error and how it impacts our understanding of the timing of the Rapture and of the Day of the Lord

DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS regarding:

- the Parousia (*the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ – 2:1*)
- the Rapture (*our gathering together to Him – 2:1*)
- the Day of the Lord (**2:2**)
- the Great Tribulation period

A. The Parousia

This is a broader term than just a reference to a single event at one point in time. It begins with the Rapture and continues until the Lord establishes His millennial kingdom on earth. The Parousia is the future, bodily, visible, glorious return of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to intervene decisively in human history by gathering His people, judging the wicked, delivering the righteous, and inaugurating the final stages of God's kingdom purposes which includes the establishment of the millennial kingdom on earth.

This *gathering* of God's people includes (**1 Thess 4; Matt 24:31**):

- resurrection of the believing dead
- transformation of the living saints
- reunion with Christ

In secular Greek, *parousia* referred to:

- the arrival of a king or emperor
- the official visit of an important dignitary
- the presence of someone after arriving

The emphasis is not merely on movement ("*coming*") but on the **arrival resulting in personal presence**.

This background fits the New Testament well. Christ is not merely "coming"; He is **arriving to be personally present with His people and to exercise His royal authority**.

The Parousia is also a **day of judgment**. **2 Thessalonians 1:7–10**

and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed.

The returning Christ:

- repays affliction
- judges unbelief
- glorifies His saints

The Parousia leads directly into:

- defeat of the Antichrist
- binding of Satan
- establishment of the Millennial Kingdom

(Revelation 19–20)

B. The Rapture – we defined this last week as we studied **1 Thess. 4**

The word itself comes from the Latin translation of **1 Thess. 4:7** – translating the word “caught up” -- The **Rapture** is best understood as a **specific event** within God's end-time program, whereas the **Parousia** is the broader event of Christ's royal arrival and presence. A careful definition should distinguish the two without separating them more than Scripture does. The Rapture kicks off the Parousia

A concise theological definition is:

The Rapture is the future event in which Jesus Christ gathers His church to Himself by resurrecting deceased believers and instantaneously transforming living believers into glorified bodies, so that together they are caught up to meet the Lord and remain with Him forever.

C. The Day of the Lord –

Last week we mentioned briefly some of the **OT prophecies** that characterized the Day of the Lord as a time of the outpouring of God's wrath – a time of darkness and gloom and destruction

This is not a 24 hour day but an appointed season of the Lord's activity in the end times. It actually begins with the opening of the 7th seal in the Book of Revelation following the cosmic signs in the heavens described in the 6th seal. The **trumpets** and **bowls** are the outpouring of God's wrath. Believers are not appointed to wrath but will experience deliverance before that time period.

The Day of the Lord is the divinely appointed period in which the sovereign Lord personally intervenes in history to judge His enemies, deliver His people, vindicate His holiness, and advance His kingdom purposes.

Think of all of Satan's efforts to thwart the kingdom purposes of God. The Day of the Lord is in contrast to the current Day of Man and will manifest the supreme authority and victory and dominion of the Lord where He alone is exalted. Satan and the world system are attempting to exercise authority right now; but God alone will dramatically reverse that situation and exercise supreme and final dominion.

The **time references** for the beginning and the ending of the Day of Wrath are key for any eschatological system:

The beginning point of the Day of the Lord must be right after the rapture of the church. My thesis today is to argue that the Rapture must occur after the mid-point of the 70th week of Daniel (where you have the Abomination of Desolation and the full revelation of the Antichrist) and after the Great Tribulation Period (which we will define next) but to leave enough time in the final half of Daniel's 70th week for the trumpets and bowls of the book of Revelation which constitute the outpouring of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord. This is the key point to nail down and will become clear as we continue on.

The end point of the Day of the Lord cannot include the Millennium – because it is strictly a time of devastating judgment, not blessing. After the Day of the Lord there will be blessing. **2 Pet. 3:10** is speaking either of the renovation of the new heavens and new earth in preparation for the millennial kingdom – or of a second Day of the Lord that occurs at the end of the millennial kingdom. But how can that event also be described as coming *like a thief in the night*?? Aside from this verse it is clear that the Day of the Lord consists of judgment.

As the outpouring of the wrath of God, the day of the Lord must be distinguished from persecution or tribulation or what is called the **Great Tribulation** period. During these times you have the activity of Satan in persecuting and afflicting believers.

D. The Great Tribulation Period

Referring to the 70th week of Daniel as the Tribulation Period is a poor descriptor. The Greek word *thlipsis* occurs 20 times in the NT – almost always in nonprophetic contexts – such as *in the world you shall have tribulation (John 16:33)*.

The Great Tribulation is the climactic period of unprecedented distress during the latter part of Daniel's seventieth week, marked by the **persecution of God's people** under the Antichrist,

worldwide deception, and catastrophic upheaval, culminating in the visible Parousia of Christ, the gathering of His elect, and the inauguration of the Day of the Lord.

Matt. 24:21 *for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.*

Note the **context**: *What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*

Notice from this passage that the **great tribulation** occurs after the **abomination of desolation** – a key event that occurs after **the great apostasy** or falling away (**24:10**) at the mid point of Daniel's 70th week (**Dan. 9**) = the last 7 years of the end times before the millennial kingdom

This great tribulation is also referenced in **Rev. 7:14** -- *These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* In conjunction with the 6th seal – a multitude of martyrs who have come out of the great tribulation.

Now most people assume that the Great Tribulation will last for 3 ½ years – but Christ explicitly teaches that those days will be cut short – **Matt. 24:22**. But the 70th week of Daniel is not shortened.

Immediately after the Great Tribulation (and before the end of the 70th week of Daniel) there will be significant cosmic disturbances.

Matt. 24:29-30 *But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,³⁰ and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.*

The Lord's coming from heaven will be for the purpose of rapturing the church before the Day of the Lord's wrath begins with the opening of the seventh seal.

Significant Application: Believers need to be prepared to face incredibly difficult times of persecution and suffering. It is not surprising that the believers in Thessalonica who were experiencing such severe persecution mistakenly believed the false teaching that they were already in the Day of the Lord.

Now we have to try to put together the sequencing of all of these events and time periods

TIMING ISSUES -- Relationship between these events

The Relationship Between the Rapture at the beginning of the Parousia and the subsequent Day of the Lord seems clear – the Rapture kicks off the Day of the Lord – there is no intervening time period

The New Testament closely connects these themes.

The Parousia is **the arrival of the King**.

The Day of the Lord is **the period of divine intervention, judgment, and kingdom blessing that His arrival inaugurates.**

Thus:

- the Parousia focuses on **the Divine Person** who arrives to be present with His people
- the Day of the Lord focuses on **the Divine Program initiated by His coming**

The two ideas overlap significantly but are not identical.

The Pretrib position demands that the day of the Lord start at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel. But **2 Thess 2** says that is not possible.

But the Day of the Lord must start right after the Rapture – there can be no intervening period of time.

Luke 17:24-30 – **on the same day** that Noah was delivered, the world was destroyed by the flood; **on the same day** that Lot exited the condemned city of Sodom, God sent devastating judgment.

It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. (Lk. 17:30)

Cosmic Disturbances must precede the Day of the Lord – **Marvin Rosenthal**, p. 152 --

Since these are associated with the opening of the 6th seal in the book of Rev.

“The sixth seal is opened after the Great Tribulation. And the Great Tribulation is cut short and ends before the end of the seventieth week (**Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:23-25**; see also **Rev. 6:12**, where cosmic disturbance occurs after the martyrdom associated with the Great Tribulation).

Second, the sign of the appearing of the Son of man in heaven will be manifested following the opening of the sixth seal (**Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27**). This occurs after the Great Tribulation but long before the end of the seventieth week. The seven trumpet judgments must be poured out before the seventieth week ends (**Rev. 11:15**). The fifth trumpet judgment alone is said to last five months (**Rev. 9:1, 5**). This appearance of the Son of man in heaven before the opening of the seventh seal is related to the rapturing of the church before the Day of the Lord’s wrath begins. God does not exempt His people from man’s wrath; He does exempt them from His wrath (Lot was told to flee Sodom and Noah to get into the ark before God’s wrath fell). God’s wrath begins with the opening of the seventh seal, for out of the seventh seal the seven trumpet judgments will emerge.”

Different Eschatological Views

The principal disagreement among evangelical interpreters concerns **the timing and phases** of the Parousia, not whether Christ will return.

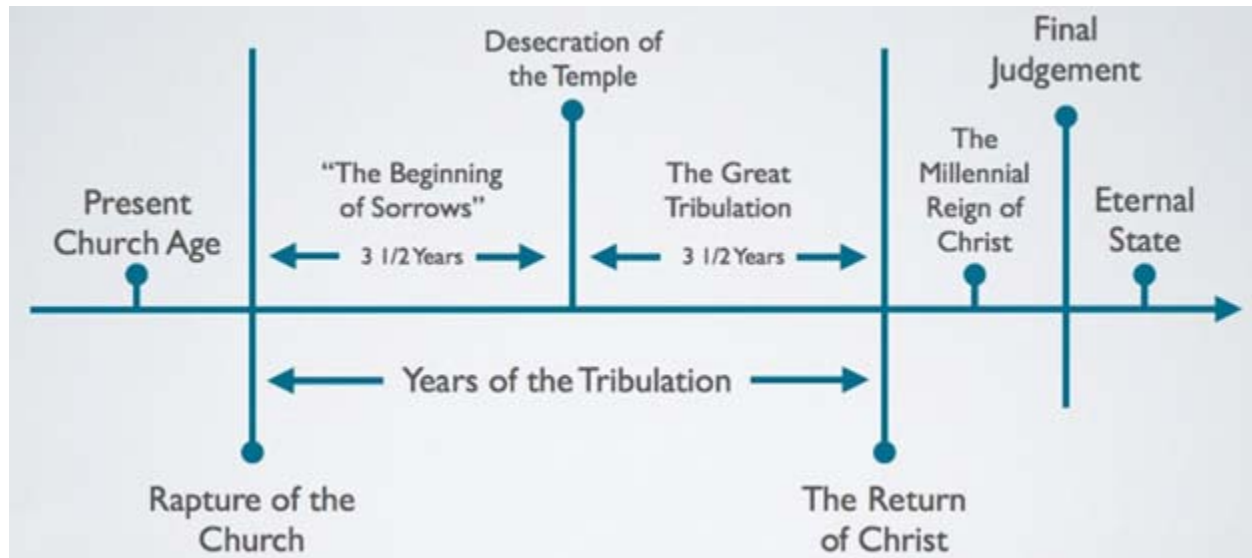
Pretribulational View

This view generally distinguishes two stages:

1. Christ comes secretly for His church (the Rapture).
2. Seven years later He comes publicly to the earth.

Thus, the Parousia is often understood as spanning both events.

Here is a timeline for the Pretrib Rapture position



This was my position until recently. In wrestling with 2 Thessalonians 2 – I just could not make sense out of how Paul's teaching fits within this timeline. So let's look again at **chap. 2**.

Paul explains that the Thessalonian believers could not possibly already be in the Day of the Lord because 2 events have to take place before that could happen:

- 1) The **apostasy** must come first
- 2) The **man of lawlessness** must be revealed – 2 important subsets of that event:
 - he enters God's temple – this would require a rebuilt temple
 - he exalts himself as God

What is this apostasy that he is referencing?

Some commentators prefer the interpretation: *the departing* as a reference to the rapture – I believe the reference is to the great apostasy that will occur at the mid-point of Daniel's 70th week and is associated with the abomination of desolation and the full revelation of the antichrist

Look at the **biblical evidence** for identifying a major apostasy event leading up to the full revelation of the Antichrist at the Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 9:27 — Israel's Covenant with the Coming Ruler

Daniel predicts:

"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..."

Several observations:

- The covenant is made with "**the many**," which many dispensational interpreters understand as the leadership of Israel.
- Israel has resumed temple worship.

- Midway through the week, the ruler breaks the covenant.
- The temple is desecrated.

This implies that many in Israel initially place their confidence in this ruler before his true character is exposed.

Daniel 11:30–35 — Apostasy Within Israel -- This passage is particularly significant.

Daniel says:

"He will show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant." [Different covenant]

Later:

"By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant..."

Notice two distinct groups.

The Apostates -- They:

- forsake the covenant
- cooperate with the oppressor
- accept deception

The Faithful -- Verse 32:

"But the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

Thus Israel is divided into:

- apostates
- faithful remnant

This anticipates the same division Jesus describes in **Matthew 24**.

2 Thess. 2:11 *And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false*

What are the arguments for referencing the rapture as the departure in 2 Thess. 2?

- Linguistic arguments – the word *apostasy* is the English word that comes from the Greek compound word *apo* – meaning *away from* and *stasis* meaning *standing* – a standing away from, a departure – now is this a doctrinal falling away (defection, revolt, rebellion) or a departure of believers from the location of earth? Both meanings are possible. The KJV translates it as apostasy. NIV, NASB, RSV and many translations support this option. Some other versions use the term departure instead.

There is only 1 other NT usage = **Acts 21:21** -- *and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to **forsake Moses**, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.*

I think the linguistic argument is stronger for “apostasy”

- Use of the definite article – It is said that apostasy is occurring all of the time so that there is no one specific overarching apostasy that could be referenced here while the definite article makes sense with reference to **The Rapture** event
But the apostasy associated with the **Abomination of Desolation** is certainly major enough to be distinguished from just generic apostasy down thru the ages

- Argument from the purpose of Paul's writing here – his goal is **to bring comfort** to the believers; certainly the Rapture event brings comfort while the apostasy event would not have such a connection – but every single aspect of Paul's teaching in the book does not have to reference a direct connection to bringing comfort. Paul's comfort is not "You'll miss the 70th week of Daniel," but "You'll be vindicated when Christ appears in glory."

The strongest argument for the **apostasy view** in my opinion is the **overall context**.

I find a strong connection between the apostasy associated with the Abomination of Desolation and the full revelation of the Antichrist at the mid point of Daniel's 70th week.

I also find that the Pre-trib position requires that the entire 70th week of Daniel be designated as the Day of the Lord – since the Rapture must take place before that time period. This is not consistent with other biblical teaching on the day of the Lord which distinguishes persecution instigated by Satan from the pouring out of God's wrath in judgment. The Thessalonians mistook persecution for the onset of God's eschatological wrath. Paul distinguishes between the suffering believers experience in a fallen world and the unique judgments that characterize the Day of the Lord.

[Paul Feinberg and Richard Mayhue – important leaders in the pretrib camp -- agree that the Day of the Lord cannot begin at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel – that is quite a concession compared to previous teaching by pretrib proponents]

What is the identity of this man of lawlessness? I think there is much more agreement here that this is the AntiChrist as referenced in the book of Daniel and in Revelation. "*the prince who is to come*" (**Da 9:26**) = "*the little horn*" (**Da 7:8**) who John calls "*the beast*" (**Rev 13:2-10, 18**) and most know as the *Antichrist*

This is the man who will make a covenant of peace with Israel at the beginning of the 7 year period and then break that covenant with the despicable act of the Abomination of Desolation at the mid point. His actions were prefigured by the deeds of the Syrian leader **Antiochus Epiphanes** in 168 BC ...**Daniel 8** gives us an historical precedent for the abomination in the temple which he will feature in **Chap. 9**. He had his soldiers kill a pig on the altar of the temple where sacrifices were normally offered by the priests in the worship of Jehovah. Then he had an image of chief god, Zeus Olympus carried into the Holy of Holies in an abominable act of complete desecration. He demanded that people bow down and worship his god.

When is this man of lawlessness revealed?

What Does "Revealed" Mean?

The Greek word is **ἀποκαλύπτω** (*apokalyptō*), meaning:

- to uncover
- to disclose
- to make manifest
- to reveal openly

Paul uses the same verb for the revelation of Christ (**2 Thess. 1:7**).

The point is not merely that the Antichrist exists, but that **his true identity and character become publicly manifest**.

How Is He Revealed?

Paul describes several defining characteristics.

1. He Exalts Himself Above Every God -- 2 Thessalonians 2:4

"...who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god..."

His self-deification becomes unmistakable.

2. He Takes His Seat in God's Temple

Paul continues:

"...so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

This act corresponds closely to the **Abomination of Desolation** predicted by Daniel and cited by Jesus.

Compare:

- Daniel 9:27
- Daniel 11:36
- Matthew 24:15
- Mark 13:14

Most dispensational interpreters identify this temple desecration as the **public revelation** of the Man of Lawlessness.

Jesus' Chronology

Matthew 24 provides an important parallel.

False Christs

↓

Abomination of Desolation

↓

Great Tribulation

↓

Cosmic Signs

↓

Parousia

↓

Gathering of the Elect

Notice that Jesus treats **the Abomination** as the event that launches the Great Tribulation.

Doesn't this sequence look suspiciously the same as how the Apostle Paul lays out end time events in 1-2 Thessalonians?

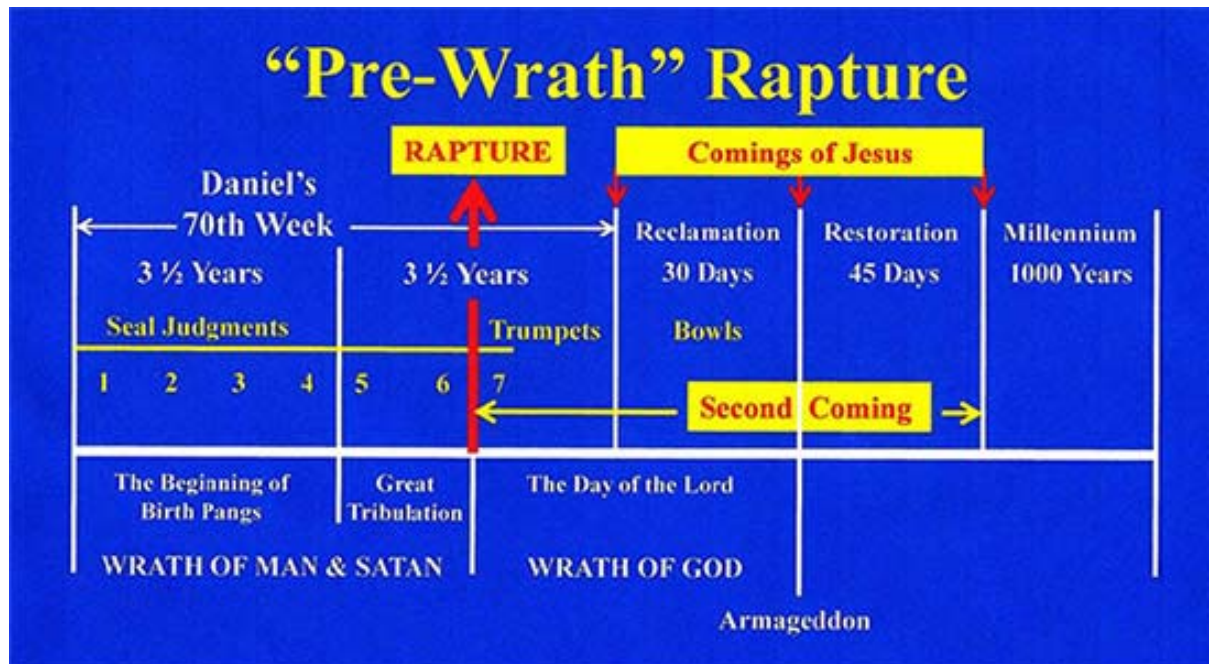
Paul appears to describe the same events.

From a dispensational, premillennial, Pre-Wrath perspective, the **Man of Lawlessness is revealed when he publicly commits the Abomination of Desolation by entering the temple, exalting himself as God, and demanding worship (2 Thess. 2:3–4; Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15).**

This event occurs **around the midpoint of Daniel's seventieth week**, inaugurates the Great Tribulation, and serves as one of the two indispensable precursors Paul identifies before the Day of the Lord. His reign continues until it is terminated by **the appearance (epiphaneia) of Christ's Parousia**, when the Lord destroys him and inaugurates the Day of the Lord's judgments and the consummation of His kingdom purposes.

Pre-Wrath View

Timeline:



Every view of eschatology has its strong points and its weaknesses –

Issue #1

Based on the Daniel 9 prophecy of 70 weeks, many people cannot see the church as being an appropriate participant in that last 70th week. The argument is that God is once again taking up His specific program for the nation of Israel. And certainly that is the emphasis during this time. But there was a transition in the early church right after its birth at Pentecost. There was time involved in the passing away of the old economy and the establishment of the new. The Jews continued to go to the synagogue and their religious system was not totally transformed until the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. So there will be a transitional time in the 70th week where the focus switches from the church to the nation of Israel once again.

Marvin Rosenthal: The church will enter Israel's seventieth week to hand of the baton to 144,000 Jews before the Day of the Lord commences (**Rev. 7:3-9**).

Issue #2

People will criticize the Pre-Wrath position because emotionally they do not want to relinquish the doctrine of **imminency** = **that Christ could come back at any moment** – not that He can only come back after the apostasy and after the man of lawlessness has been fully revealed and has entered the rebuilt temple, etc. – that is a major change in outlook.

J. Barton Payne: understanding that certain prophesied events had to occur before Christ's return so it could not be imminent in the sense of occur at any moment –

“the death of Paul and Peter, the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and the spread of the gospel (Great Commission) means the early Apostolic Church could not have held an “any moment” view of the Lord's coming.”

Still we must be prepared; still we must live in anticipation; still we must be looking forward to Christ's return – but admittedly this is a different outlook.

We are told that the day of the Lord comes as a **thief in the night** to unbelievers – **1 Thess. 5** – in that they will be completely taken by surprise – but we believers – while we don't know the exact day and hour – have been instructed regarding the signs of Christ's coming that help us to understand when the end is near – we don't live in darkness but in the light.

1 Thess. 5:4 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;*

Remember, Christ had provided signs in His Olivet Discourse in Matt. 24 to help alert the disciples as to the season of His return and the end of this age

Believers are not promised exemption from fiery trials of tribulation and persecution

1 Peter 4: 12- 13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

We must be prepared to experience suffering, not be surprised by it.

PART2:

INTRODUCTION:

Last Sunday we studied some eschatology issues from the book of 2 Thessalonians. We contrasted the Pre-Trib Rapture position with the Pre-Wrath Rapture position. You should really purchase the book by **Marvin Rosenthal** – The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church – put Marvin Rosenthal into the search box on my website – link to purchase on Amazon – if they run out of new books – under \$15 – then buy a used one cheap. A must read.

Today we will study the epistle of 2 Thessalonians itself – just 3 short chapters.

Let's review the **OCCASION** for writing 2 Thessalonians – Paul was addressing 3 very specific problems

- **Intensity of Persecution** – Probably this is what contributed in part to the false belief of some that they were already in the Day of the Lord
- **Illegitimate Doctrinal Error Regarding Eschatology**

- **Irresponsible Living** – doctrine impacts our practical conduct

BIG IDEA: As Believers Anticipate The Second Coming They Must **Remain Steadfast** Despite:

- Affliction and Persecution
- Apostasy and Deception
- Antagonists and Undisciplined Brothers

2 Thessalonians 2:15 “so then brethren, stand firm”

Outline of the Book:

- I. **(1:3-12) Steadfast Despite Affliction and Suffering**
- II. **(2:1-17) Steadfast Despite Apostasy and Deception**
- III. **(3:1 – 3:16) Steadfast Despite Evil Antagonists and Undisciplined Brothers**

**I. (1:3-12) Steadfast Despite Affliction And Suffering –
Believers Must Show Themselves Worthy Of Their Christian Identity By Remaining Steadfast In The Face Of Persecution Until Christ Returns**

- Steadfast In Christian Growth As Observed By Others
“may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering”
- Steadfast In Bearing Fruit To The Glory Of God As Evaluated By God Himself
“that our God may count you worthy of your calling”

**II. (2:1-17) Steadfast Despite Apostasy And Deception –
Believers Must Withstand The Deception Regarding The Coming Apostasy And The Operation Of The Antichrist By Remaining Steadfast In Their Love Of The Truth And Secure In God’s Providential Care**

- Initiated In Election
- Carried Out Through Sanctification
- Culminating In the Glory of Final Salvation

**III. (3:1 – 3:16) Steadfast Despite Evil Antagonists And Undisciplined Brothers —
Believers Must Remain Steadfast In Their Missionary Outreach (Despite Evil Antagonists) And Balanced In Their Example Of Unselfish, Disciplined Labor (Despite Misguided And Unruly Brethren)**

Bill McRae:

- Chap. 1 – The Persecution of the Church
- Chap. 2 – The Parousia of the Lord
- Chap. 3 – The Practice of the Thessalonians

Ken Boa:

- Chap. 1 – Encouragement in the face of Persecution – Commended**
Addresses Discouraged Believers because of their persecution

Chap. 2—Explanation of the Day of the Lord – Corrected

Addresses Disturbed Believers because of their confusion regarding eschatology

Chap. 3 – Exhortation to the church at Thessalonica – Comforted

Addresses Disobedient Believers

Now let's work our way thru the book in more detail.

After a very straightforward greeting in **vs. 1-2**

- *Grace* -- We have all of the divine resources we need to live the Christian life
- *Peace* – Our goal is harmonious Christian living in the context of our total well-being

Gordon Fee: Paul's second letter to the believers in Thessalonica appears to have followed hard on the heels of the first one, since each of the three issues addressed here is picked up in some way or another from the first letter. Moreover, the two major items in this case—the coming of the Lord and the unruly-idle—are now spoken to by a somewhat aggrieved apostle in an expanded form (**2:1–12; 3:6–13**). The third item, addressed more indirectly in the first letter, deals with the believers' present persecution at the hands of fellow citizens in Thessalonica. In this letter it is the first thing up, as the major item in the opening thanksgiving (**1:6–10**).

I. (1:3-12) Steadfast Despite Affliction And Suffering – Believers Must Show Themselves Worthy Of Their Christian Identity By Remaining Steadfast in the Face Of Persecution Until Christ Returns

A. (1:3-5) SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTION MERITS A GOOD REPUTATION

1. (:3b) Observable Spiritual Growth

- a. In **Faith** -- *“because your faith is greatly enlarged”*
- b. In **Love** -- *“and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater.”*

We see here that our faith and love (2 core brand marks of genuine Christianity) should be evident by our actions. These are not just internal attitudes. They show themselves in how we live and respond to difficult circumstances and relate to others. Can others observe your faith and love?

2. Encouragement from a Good Reputation

- a. (:3a) Encouragement from the Thanksgiving of Others to God
 - 1) Ongoing Thanksgiving
 - “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren”*
 - 2) Appropriate Thanksgiving -- *“as is only fitting”*
- b. (:4) Encouragement from the Praise of Others – Testifying to your Good Example among the Churches
 - 1) Source of Praise
 - “therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you”*

- 2) Sphere of Praise – “among the churches of God”
- 3) Focus of Praise
 - a) “for your perseverance”
 - b) “and faith”
- 4) Degree of Difficulty
 - “in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.”

These persecutions must have been quite **severe**. For some of the believers ended up believing the erroneous teaching that they were already experiencing the Day of the Lord as we will see in Chap. 2

- c. (:5) Encouragement from the Conviction of the World
 - 1) Perseverance and Faith Speak Loudly
 - “This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment”
 - 2) Our Conduct Should Measure up to Our Calling
 - “so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God”

Perseverance doesn’t make us **deserving** of the kingdom but gives evidence to our transformed nature that makes us fit for the kingdom.

- 3) Suffering is Painful but Passing –
 - “for which indeed you are suffering.”

Grant Osborne: The present result of this process is that they “will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.” The sufferings they are enduring are the blows of the sculptor’s hammer fashioning out of the lump of rock that is their lives a masterpiece of creation, **a God-worthy warrior of the divine kingdom**. God is the implied agent wielding the hammer and creating something magnificent out of all their troubles. The picture is of the process of troubles involved in this new creation. It is the now and not-yet of the inaugurated kingdom that is in view, and it involves not only their present vindication but also their future glory. So their present suffering is a positive event in which divine judgment is already proving itself *dikaïos*, just and right.

B. (1:6-10) THE SECOND COMING SPELLS RELIEF FOR THE AFFLICTED BUT RETRIBUTION FOR OUR ANTAGONISTS

- 1. (:6-7) The Righteous Judgment of God -- “For after all it is only just for God”
 - a. Retribution for Our Antagonists
 - “to repay with affliction those who afflict you”
 - b. Relief for the Afflicted
 - 1) Persecuted Believers in Thessalonica
 - “and to give relief to you who are afflicted”
 - 2) Apostolic Missionary Team -- “and to us as well”
 - c. Timeframe = The Second Coming / Transition
 - “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire”

We tend to overlook the important role of **God's mighty angels** – we are going to see in Chap. 2 that they are fulfilling a critical function right now and will have even greater visibility in the end times.

Michael Martin: In the context of the unjust suffering of the righteous it serves as an assurance that evil men ultimately will receive the punishment they deserve. For the righteous it is somehow easier to suffer at the hands of evil with the knowledge that the evil persecutor will not escape but will be brought to justice. The promise of a balancing of accounts in the future may not eliminate the pain of suffering, but it does reduce its insult. It confirms the innocence of the victim and limits evil's success. The victim's temporary affliction is easier to bear when viewed against the eternal suffering of the afflicter.

2. (:8-9) The Penalty of Eternal Destruction

- a. Characterized as Payback – Expression: “Paybacks are Hell”
“*dealing out retribution*”
- b. Who Has to Pay the Piper? Twofold description of unbelievers
 - 1) Unbelievers -- “*to those who do not know God*”
 - 2) Disobedient
“*and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*”
- c. Eternal Consequences for Unbelief and Disobedience
 - 1) Eternal Destruction
“*And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction*”

Not talking about **annihilation** here – but eternal suffering – especially felt in separation from God and His goodness and glory. Look at the context of **Isaiah 66**

Isa. 66:6 *The voice of the Lord who is rendering recompense to His enemies*

Isa. 66:15 *For behold, the LORD will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.*

Final verse of chap. – Vs. 24 “*their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched*”
a clear reference to an **unending punishment of conscious beings**.

- 2) Eternal Separation
 - a) “*away from the presence of the Lord*”
 - b) “*and from the glory of His power*”

3. (:10) The Goal of the Second Coming

- a. Its Certainty-- “*when He comes*”
- b. Its Glory -- “*to be glorified in His saints on that day*”
- c. Its Awe -- “*and to be marveled at among all who have believed*”
- d. Its Vindication -- “*for our testimony to you was believed*”

Look at the **clear connection** between the return of Christ – how it brings glory to believers

(1 Thess. 4) and the process of the judgment of the Lord being unleashed in the Day of the Lord. That is one of the reasons why we believe there is **no gap** between the Rapture and the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

C. (1:11-12) SPIRITUAL FRUIT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD RIGHT NOW

1. Need for Intercessory Prayer -- *“To this end also we pray for you always”*

2. Need to Measure Up to the Standard

“that our God may count you worthy of your calling”

3. Two Aspects of Spiritual Fruit

a. Its Intrinsic Character -- *“and fulfill every desire for goodness”*

b. Its Powerful Dynamic -- *“and the work of faith with power”*

4. Ultimate Goal = Glory to God

a. *“in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you”*

b. *“and you in Him”*

5. Superabundant Resource

“according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”

Grant Osborne: As God brings his work in us to completion, he reproduces his **goodness** in us, and that stimulates our desires to conform with his. This in turn deepens our faith, leading to good deeds that magnify him. The purpose of this is that the glory of Christ is manifest in us as we faithfully live for him. The glory of the saints is both present and future, and our sharing of his glory in the here and now is but a foretaste of the **eternal glory** that awaits us.

II. (2:1-17) STEADFAST DESPITE APOSTASY AND DECEPTION – BELIEVERS MUST WITHSTAND THE DECEPTION REGARDING THE COMING APOSTASY AND THE OPERATION OF THE ANTICHRIST BY REMAINING STEADFAST IN THEIR LOVE OF THE TRUTH AND SECURE IN GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL CARE (INITIATED IN ELECTION, CARRIED OUT THROUGH SANCTIFICATION AND CULMINATING IN THE GLORY OF FINAL SALVATION)

A. (2:1-5) HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE NOT IN THE DAY OF THE LORD? THE REVEALING OF THE ANTICHRIST MUST PRECEDE THE DAY OF THE LORD.

Missed the boat?

1. (:1-3a) Don’t Be Deceived about the Order of Events.

a. Subject Under Discussion -- *“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to”:*

1) Second Coming -- *“the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”*

2) Rapture -- *“and our gathering together to Him”*

b. Need to Stay Level-Headed

1) *“that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure”*

2) *“or be disturbed”*

c. Error to Watch out for -- *“to the effect that the day of the Lord has come”*

d. Possible Delivery Methods

1) *“either by a spirit”*

- 2) “or a message”
- 3) “or a letter as if from us”
- e. Summary Warning
 - “Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first ...”
- 2. (:3b-4) The Revelation of the Antichrist Will Be a Blatant Display of Apostasy = Impossible to miss it
 - a. Rebellious Character of the Apostasy Will Be Blatantly Obvious
 - 1) “the apostasy”
 - 2) “the man of lawlessness is revealed”
 - 3) “the son of destruction”
 - b. Sacrilegious Actions of the Antichrist Will Be Blatantly Obvious
 - 1) General Description of Usurption of Worship
 - “who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship”
 - 2) Ultimate Display of Sacrilegious Blasphemy
 - “so that he takes his seat in the temple of God”
 - 3) Primary Objective
 - “displaying himself as being God”
- 3. (:5) Don’t Be Forgetful about Your Former Course in Eschatology.
 - “Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?”

B. (2:6-12) FOUR MODES OF OPERATION FOR THE ANTICHRIST

1. (:6-7) Mystery Mode of Operation – Presently Active during this Church Age but **Restrained**

- a. Antichrist presently restrained by ???
 - “And you know *what restrains him* now”
- b. Antichrist awaiting Future Revelation and Intense Activity
 - “so that in his time he may be revealed”
- c. Antichrist active Behind the Scenes Right Now
 - “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work”
- d. Restraining Influence Will Be Removed
 - “only *he who now restrains* will do so until he is taken out of the way”

Identification of the Restrainer in 2 Thess. 2:7

Any proposed interpretation should account for several observations from the text.

1. The **Restrainer** currently restrains the revelation of the **Man of Lawlessness**.
2. The restraint is temporary until the mid-point of Daniel’s 70th week at the **Abomination of Desolation** – this is well before the Day of the Lord begins after the Great Tribulation and the Rapture
3. The Restrainer steps aside in some sense
4. The **Man of Lawlessness** is then fully revealed – the hindering is associated with the unleashing of the events of the Great Tribulation

5. The Restrainer appears first as a **neuter** ("what restrains," v. 6) and then as a **masculine** ("he who restrains," v. 7).
 6. Paul expected the Thessalonians already to know the identity of the restrainer
- These criteria help evaluate the various proposals.

Look at 3 main views:

1. The Holy Spirit (Working Through the Church)

Summary of View

This is the **most widely held traditional interpretation** among conservative, evangelical scholars. It holds that the restrainer is the **Holy Spirit**, particularly His **indwelling and restraining influence through the Church**.

Supporting Arguments

- **Grammatical Clues:**

In verse 6, the restrainer is referred to with a **neuter pronoun** ("what restrains"), and in verse 7 with a **masculine pronoun** ("he who restrains").

This fits the Holy Spirit, who is both **divine (personal)** and **spiritual (neuter in grammatical gender)**.

- **Divine Power Required:**

The restrainer must be powerful enough to hold back Satan's plan to reveal the Antichrist. Only **God Himself** has such authority.

- **The Spirit's Present Ministry:**

The Holy Spirit currently restrains evil through the Church's presence, gospel proclamation, and moral influence

When the Church is removed (requires a pretrib position), this unique restraining ministry will "step aside," allowing lawlessness to surge.

Key Texts

- *And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: (John 16:8, BSB)* — The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
- *You, little children, are from God and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4, BSB)* — The Spirit in believers is greater than the spirit of antichrist in the world.
- *So the LORD said, 'My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days shall be 120 years.' (Genesis 6:3, BSB)* — God's Spirit will not strive with man forever.

Summary

The Holy Spirit, working through the Church, restrains evil until the Church's removal. Then the Antichrist will be revealed, and the final rebellion will unfold

2. Human Government (Especially the Roman Empire)

Summary of View

This was the **dominant view among early church fathers** such as Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Augustine. They believed the restrainer was **lawful human government**, particularly the **Roman Empire**, which maintained order and delayed the rise of the Antichrist.

Supporting Arguments

- **Historical Context:**

In Paul's day, the Roman Empire was the primary power restraining chaos and

lawlessness.

Tertullian wrote that Christians prayed for the Empire's stability because its fall would unleash the Antichrist.

- **Biblical Principle:**

Government is ordained by God to restrain evil (*'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which is from God. The authorities that exist have been appointed by God.'*² Consequently, whoever resists authority is opposing what God has set in place, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the one in authority? Then do what is right, and you will have his approval.⁴ For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not carry the sword in vain. He is God's servant, an agent of retribution to the wrongdoer.; **Romans 13:1-4**, BSB).

Thus, civil authority can be seen as a "restraining" force against lawlessness.

- **Continuity:**

Even after Rome's fall, the principle of human government continues to restrain evil until God removes that restraint.

Weaknesses

- Human government alone cannot restrain **spiritual evil** or Satan's power.
- The restrainer is said to be "taken out of the way," which doesn't fit the ongoing presence of governments throughout history.

Might require some type of view of **reconstituted Roman govt** in end times

3. Michael the Archangel

Based primarily on **Daniel 10–12** and **Revelation 12**. Michael has long been recognized as having a special guardian relationship to Israel.

Daniel 10:13

An angel explains that he was delayed by the "*prince of Persia*" until Michael came to help him.

This passage reveals:

- Spiritual warfare exists behind earthly kingdoms.
- Nations have demonic rulers opposing God's purposes.
- Michael intervenes on behalf of God's plan.

Daniel 10:21

"*Michael your prince.*"

The "*your*" refers to Daniel and the Jewish people.

Michael is specifically assigned to **protect Israel**.

Daniel 12:1

"*Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise.*"

This occurs during Israel's greatest future distress.

Michael's ministry is directly connected with:

- Israel
- the Great Tribulation
- Israel's ultimate deliverance

Supporting Arguments

Daniel 10 and 12 describe Michael as a heavenly being who restrains demonic powers and protects God's people – especially having a guardian relationship to Israel

When Michael “*stands aside*” (**Daniel 12:1**), a time of great trouble begins—similar to the removal of the restrainer in **2 Thessalonians 2:7**. -- *Stand aside or be inactive*

Some understand this as Michael stepping aside or changing his role.

Revelation 12:7-8, 12-13 portrays Michael in conflict with Satan shortly before the end.

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war,⁸ and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. . . .¹² "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

The woman represents Israel, who gave Christ (the male child) to the world – will be severely persecuted during the Great Tribulation = **the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7)**

Strengths

Daniel and 2 Thessalonians share several themes:

- end times
- Antichrist
- unprecedented tribulation
- desecration of the temple.

Michael is powerful enough to restrain demonic activity.

2. (:8) Revealed Mode of Operation – Revealed for a Brief Rampage during the Tribulation Period ... Then Terminated (marked for extinction)

a. Revealed for a Brief Rampage

“And then that lawless one will be revealed”

b. Terminated at the Second Coming

1) *“whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth”*

2) *“and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming”*

3. (:9-10a) Satanic Mode of Operation – What is Satan trying to Accomplish?

“that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan”

a. Outwardly Impressive – Supernatural WOW Impact

1) *“with all power”*

2) *“and signs”*

3) *“and false wonders”*

b. Inwardly Deceptive and Destructive

1) Inwardly Deceptive -- *“and with all the deception of wickedness”*

2) Destructive -- *“for those who perish”*

4. (:11-12) Divine Mode Of Operation – What is the Bigger Picture?

What is God Actually Accomplishing?

- a. (:11) Deception Reinforcing Unbelief and False Worship
“And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false”
- b. (:12) Guilt Validating Final Judgment for Unbelief and Wickedness
“in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness”

C. (2:13-17) PERILOUS END TIMES CALL FOR STEADFASTNESS ON THE PART OF THE ELECT (WHOM GOD LOVES AND STRENGTHENS)

1. (:13) Appreciating the Process of Divine Election

- a. Obligated to Give Thanks
“But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren”
- b. Rooted in God’s Initiating Love -- *“beloved by the Lord”*
- c. Ordained by God’s Sovereign (and Unfathomable) Selection
“because God has chosen you”
- d. Predating any Human Involvement -- *“from the beginning”*
- e. Destined for God’s Ultimate Blessing -- *“for salvation”*
- f. Dependent Upon a Process that Combines Divine Preservation and Human Perseverance
 - 1) Divine Preservation and Purifying
“through sanctification by the Spirit”
 - 2) Human Perseverance and Responsibility -- *“and faith in the truth”*

2. (:14) Understanding the Purpose of God’s Calling

“And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

3. (:15) Standing Firm in the Tradition of Truth

“So then, brethren, stand firm, and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”

4. (:16-17) Resting in the Comfort and Encouragement of God’s Loving Care

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”

III. (3:1 - 3:16) STEADFAST DESPITE EVIL ANTAGONISTS AND UNDISCIPLINED BROTHERS –

BELIEVERS MUST REMAIN STEADFAST IN THEIR MISSIONARY OUTREACH (DESPITE EVIL ANTAGONISTS) AND BALANCED IN THEIR EXAMPLE OF UNSELFISH, DISCIPLINED LABOR (DESPITE MISGUIDED AND UNRULY BRETHREN)

A. (3:1-5) MISSIONARIES AND THEIR DISCIPLE CHURCHES (SUPPORTING CHURCHES) PURSUE A PATH OF STEADFASTNESS (DESPITE THE PERIL OF EVIL) WITH THE CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD THAT COMES FROM MUTUAL PRAYER

- 1. (:1) Prayer for Continued Missionary Success –**
Based on the Effectiveness of the Word of God

(Key = Power of God's Word as Previously Demonstrated)

"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you"

2. (:2-3) Prayer for Continued Missionary Safety –

In a Climate of Persecution

(Key = Faithfulness of the Lord according to His Promises)

a. (:2) Climate of Wicked Opposition

"and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith."

b. (:3) Confidence in the Lord's Faithfulness and Protection

"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

3. (:4) Confidence in the Steadfastness of the Disciple Churches –

To Continue to Obey the Lord's Commands

"And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command."

4. (:5) Prayer for the Steadfastness of the Disciple Churches –

Rooted in the Love of God

"And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ."

B. (3:6-16) CHURCH DISCIPLINE MAY BE NECESSARY TO REINFORCE THE NEED FOR A DISCIPLINED LIFE OF RESPONSIBLE WORK

- TO SUPPORT YOUR OWN FAMILY

- AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

1. (:6a) Apostolic Command: An Unruly Life Requires Church Discipline

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life."

2. (:6b-10) Apostolic Tradition (Reinforcing Apostolic Commandment)

Exemplifies a Disciplined Life of Responsible Work

a. (:6b-8) Apostolic Example = Sacrificial Diligent Work

1) Instruction in Consistent Apostolic Tradition

"and not according to the tradition which you received from us"

2) Imitation of Consistent Apostolic Tradition

"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example"

3) Negative Example

a) Not Undisciplined

"because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you"

b) Not Unaccountable -- Out for a Free Ride

"nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it"

4) Positive Example

a) Sacrificial ... Diligent... Sustained Effort

“but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day”

b) Unselfish Motivation

“so that we might not be a burden to any of you”

b. (:9) Apostolic Elective = Forsaking the Right to Financial Support to Reinforce the Necessary Example

“not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example.”

c. (:10) Apostolic Edict = Corresponding ... Clear... Consistent ... Apostolic Commandment

“For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: If anyone will not work, neither let him eat.”

3. (:11-12) Apostolic Correction (for the Idle Busybodies): Get to Work!

a. Negative Report

1) Verbal Report -- *“For we hear”*

2) Limited Scope -- *“that some among you”*

3) General Indictment -- *“are leading an undisciplined life”*

4) Specific Charges

a) *“doing no work at all”*

b) *“but acting like busybodies”*

b. Nouthetic Counsel

1) Tone of Apostolic Authority

a) By way of Command -- *“Now such persons we command”*

b) By way of Exhortation -- *“and exhort”*

c) By way of Delegated Authority -- *“in the Lord Jesus Christ”*

2) Task of Personal Responsibility

a) *“to work in quiet fashion”*

b) *“and eat their own bread”*

4. (:13) Apostolic Encouragement (for the Responsible Brethren): Keep up the Good Work!

“But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.”

5. (:14-15) Apostolic Summary Warning: Carry out the Discipline if Necessary -- But with Brotherly Love

“And if anyone does not obey our instruction in the letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

6. (:16) Apostolic Benediction: Seek Peace and Pursue It

“Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!”

(3:17-18) AUTHENTICITY / CLOSING BENEDICTION

A. (3:17) AUTHENTICITY -- AUTOGRAPHIC ATTESTATION

“I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter: this is the way I write.”

B. (3:18) CLOSING BENEDICTION

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all”

CONCLUSION:

The book's message can be summarized in three memorable movements:

1. Endure faithfully through present trials because God is just.
2. Discern carefully in light of future prophecy because truth matters.
3. Serve diligently until Christ returns because every day counts.

May we be found faithful—steadfast in faith, anchored in truth, and busy in the Master's work—until the day we see our returning Lord face to face.

WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?

- To pursue the good reputation that comes from demonstrating perseverance under trial
- To heighten expectation for the return of Christ who will bring both relief and retribution
- To long for spiritual fruit right now that would bring glory to God
- To avoid deception by false teachers who misrepresent God's program for the end times
- To appreciate divine election and the security it provides
- To continue to live responsibly in dependence upon God and in a disciplined manner