

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

May 15, 2022

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Situational Context: The second coming of Christ is the principal topic of 2 Thessalonians. What Paul wrote was supplemental to his oral teaching and the instructions contained in his earlier letter. gathered to him. **1 Thessalonians 4:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

Lesson Theme: 2 Thessalonians 2.6-12 Paul is continuing to teach these believers that they need not be idle but continue to serve the Lord. The Lord has made it clear that no one knows when His return will come. However, there will be indications in the culture and world that His coming is drawing nearer. Those signs include the increasing apostasy of the church and rejection of God's laws guided and taught by the man of lawlessness. This process had already begun in Paul's time. As the time for His return draws nearer, the restraining power of the Church and gospel will be increasingly withdrawn exposing the rebellious nature of man and false believers. The man of lawlessness will be publicly exposed to believers as one leading this apostasy in the Temple of God, the church of Jesus Christ.

The title of the antichrist helps us understand his signature. Since he lawless, he opposes Gods laws and thus by doing so is proclaiming himself God. The fact that he is revealed tell us that it will take discernment and a comparison to the word of God. He will be revealed by his actions.

The Apostle John tell us that even in his day many antichrists have come, **1 John 2:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. The temple is the Church. To take his seat means to assume authority. Since the church is a worldwide body, he is aperson that influences the church world wide to apostasy.**

1. A Coup: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 (ESV) ¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. **For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,** ⁴ **who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.** ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

Interpretation: Obviously Christ's climactic return had not occurred, but Paul was combating the idea that the day of the Lord had come, and their being raptured would be imminent. This might refer to a falling away of many within the church, to an apostasy of the Jewish people, or to a worldwide rebellion against God. The apostasy of the Jews and unbelieving humanity is not likely intended as they cannot apostatize, they are already unbelievers. The term falling away applies to professed believers in the church.

Supporting Texts:

Mark 13:27 (ESV) ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

1 Timothy 4:1 (ESV) ¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

Jude 1:17-18 (ESV) ¹⁷ But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."

Matthew 24:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV) ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:17-18 (ESV) ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. ¹⁸ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

Discussion Starters:

How can the antichrist take his seat in the temple given that each church in the world is a temple combining to be the Temple of the Lord?

How does the man of lawlessness describe the antichrist?

What indicates that the man of lawlessness is a person of influence?

What will make the antichrist come out of the closet?

2. The Restrainer: 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 (ESV) ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

Interpretation: The restrainer is identified in Revelation 20:1-6 as an angel granted authority by God to bind Satan from deceiving the nations and hindering the church and gospel's effects. The restrainer is removed when Satan is unbound by God's authority just prior to the end.

Supporting Texts:

Revelation 20:1-3 (ESV) ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a

thousand years,³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. **After that he must be released for a little while.**

1 John 4:2-3 (ESV)² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

Discussion Starters:

What are some indications that restraint is already being withdrawn?

What is the effect of divine restraint?

How do we recognize the spirit of the antichrist?

3. Given Over: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (ESV)⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,¹² **in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

Interpretation: The fact that he gains his position through deception helps us to realize the power of such. False signs and wonders at the time of the writing of this letter are quite different than signs and wonders in this scientific age.

Supporting Texts:

Matthew 24:24 (ESV)²⁴ For false Christ's and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Romans 1:24-25 (ESV)²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,²⁵ because they

exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Discussion Starters:

How do professed believers become susceptible to deception?

What will indicate those given over?

What might be the nature of such signs and wonders?

What does verse 12 signify?