

Home Group Helps

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Living in the Light of His Return: The Return of the King – Part 1

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you 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. ³ 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, ⁴ 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. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 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. ⁸ And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. ¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us. ¹⁶ 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, ¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

I. Confusion Regarding the Day of the Lord (v.1-2) – Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you 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.

II. What Signs Precede the Day of the Lord? (v.3-4) – ³ 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, ⁴ 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.

1. The apostasy comes first

2. The man of lawlessness is revealed

1. Launching Question(s):

- What view of eschatology (doctrine of the end times) were you taught when growing up?

2. Observation Question(s):

- The apostle cautions the Thessalonians to, “not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us” (v.2).

- The church faces the constant threat of deception because “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.... His servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14-15).
- How might that warning apply to us today when you hear of someone proclaiming that they “had a vision” or “a word from the Lord?”

3. Interpretation Question(s):

- Paul explains that the Day of the Lord (Return of Christ) will not come until, “the (great) apostasy comes first” (v.3). In this context, the Greek word rendered “apostasy” or “rebellion” (*apostasia*) means “to turn away from” or “fall away from” genuine Christianity.
- What have been some examples of apostasy in the history of Israel? The Church?
- What might the future great apostasy look like in the modern age?
- The second great sign that must precede the Day of the Lord is, “the man of lawlessness is revealed.” The Apostle John tells us in 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.”
- So, this “man of lawlessness” is the final, ultimate anti-Christ who is to come just prior to the return of Christ.
- What are some examples of previous “anti-Christ” and how might their actions serve to inform us of the operations of the future anti-Christ to come?

4. Reflection Question(s):

- Paul closes this chapter with this encouragement: “¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- How can reflecting on these truths aid us in not being fearful at the Return of the King?

5. Application Question(s):

- How might you learn more about this subject this week?