

The First Seven Statements of 2Thessalonians Chapter 2

My goal for the text of 2Th.2.1-12 is to explain the seven statements in it as briefly as they are given; seven statements, seven explanations. There will be at the end a few remarks. Read verses 1-12.

The two major points are:

- The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. And,
- The revelation of the man of sin.

Statement 1

2Th 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Explanation 1

We ask you, brethren, in behalf of the coming of and gathering to Christ, to be not quickly moved from your understanding, or agitated through spirit, speech or letter, a letter as if by us, as though the day of Christ^{*} had come.

^{*}In the early churches the hope of the resurrection began to be distorted or doubted altogether. (1Co.15.12, no resurrection; 2Ti.2.18, the resurrection is past)

Statement 2

3 ¶ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 * Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

^{*}Who is a relative pronoun introducing an adjective clause which describes the son of perdition.

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Explanation 2

Let no one beguile you by any means (i.e., spirit, speech, or letter), because that day (the day of Christ's coming and our gathering to Him) *shall not come* except there occurs first a falling away and the man of sin is revealed, who opposes and exalts himself over all that is called God, broadcasting himself as [if He is] God.

Statement 3

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Explanation 3

Don't you remember that I told you these things when I was with you?

Statement 4

6 And now ye know ^{*} what withholdeth that ^{**} he might be revealed in his time.

Explanation 4

^{*} what is a pronoun referring to the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin (cf. v.3). If this is true we can fill in the 'what' with this information.

^{**} the antecedent to the pronoun *he* is the noun *son* in verse 3, where we read 'son of perdition': *he* and *son* agree in gender and number, being masculine and singular.

This statement can read:

And now you know the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin restrains (the coming of and our gathering together to the Lord) that he (the son of perdition) might be revealed in his due time.

So that we're clear, in this text Paul refers to Christ as coming; to the man of sin as being revealed.

Statement 5

7 ^{*} For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

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Explanation 5

*For = the reason: The reason there is a withholding of the coming of and gathering together to the Lord ... The sense is that if this is not so there was nothing which should have prevented the Lord from having already come ... It was this false notion that so concerned the Thessalonians and which Paul corrects.

The reason is, the mystery of iniquity is already working: only he (the son of perdition) who restrains now (the coming of and our gathering together to the Lord) will continue to restrain until he (the son of perdition) should be taken out of the way.

It is very unfortunate that many insert into this text the Holy Spirit. Except for personal bias, there is neither explicit nor implicit reference to the Holy Spirit.

Statement 6

8 * And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Explanation 6

*And then ... And then when? Refers to v.6, *in his time*.

And then in his time, Or, And in his time that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming; *even him* (that Wicked [one]) whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders and deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not love of the truth for them to be saved.

Statement 7

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Explanation 7

And because of this God shall send a working of delusion for them to believe a lie: in order that they all might be condemned which believed not the truth, but delighted in unrighteousness.

What is the main point of this text, verses 1-12? The apostle Paul was comforting the saints of the church which was at Thessalonica against the misconception that they were missing or had missed the day of Christ's coming. Did Jesus Christ come and they didn't know it? So Paul wrote to them and reminded them that Christ's coming is according to a Divine order of events. In this case he wrote that the day of Christ could not precede a general apostasy and that time appointed for the man of sin. Afterwards would Christ come and gather us together to Him.

Concerning the apostasy, whether this refers to the children of God forsaking the doctrine of Christ or the world forsaking the natural revelation of God in creation, I cannot say. It is my opinion that we are witnessing a convergence of both apostasies in our day.

What was my purpose for having you go through this exercise with me? It was to help us to read the word of God correctly and objectively. Have we been unduly influenced by popular opinion? No matter what we believe about this text it is true. It will come to pass just as it is written. This Scripture concerns the first resurrection. The idea of a rapture and the use of this term has brought with it the notion that there are a number of *raptures* or resurrections, and this has no Biblical foundation. There is a first resurrection which precedes the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, and there is a final or last resurrection at that last day. (cf. Re.20.11-13) Consider now three objections. Two objections for discounting the rapture theory, and one concerning the imminent coming of Christ.

Objection 1

It is said by some that the children of God are not appointed to wrath and that we can't come into the time of *the great tribulation*. (cf. 1Th.5.9) Therefore there must be a rapture. To say that we are not appointed to wrath and that the saints cannot come into the time of the great tribulation requires some explanation. In

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Revelation chapter 7, which must precede the time of the first resurrection (or, if you prefer, the rapture), there is a sudden large gathering of a great multitude standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb. They came to be here because of great tribulation. Re.7.14 tells us that these came *out of great tribulation*. For these to come out of great tribulation they must have first come into it.

Re 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The truth is that there is a great tribulation for the nation of Israel. (Mt.24.21) There is a time for great tribulation to the saints of God. (Rev.7.14) And there is great trial coming upon the whole earth. (Re.3.10) To say that the children of God do not come into great tribulation requires some elaboration. The great tribulation of the saints involves the man of sin making an all-out assault against the saints of God, unlike anything the world has ever seen in human history.

Re 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Dan.7.19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

...

25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (suffer under his reign of terror for 3 ½ years)

Objection 2

To discount the rapture doctrine will lull Christians into a lethargic, spiritual state because it sets aside the imminent coming of Christ. First of all everyone should acknowledge that the rapture doctrine has done nothing to stem the tide of Laodiceanism in the churches today. The truth is, whether we believe in a series of raptures or only in the first resurrection, there will be a general apostasy. What we believe doesn't change what the will of God is. It is certainly better that the children of God have their faith founded upon the truth. For example, if the truth of the word of God is such that Christians shall see the man of sin, then that is what we should believe. Believing the truth is always better than believing a lie.

Objection 3

Then you don't believe in the imminent coming of Jesus Christ. I do believe in the imminent coming of Jesus Christ, but that must be Biblically defined.

The Thessalonian text that we just read defined what the imminent coming of Jesus Christ means. The imminent coming of Jesus Christ is conditioned on the coming of that man of sin, the Antichrist. As there is an imminent coming of Jesus Christ, so there is an imminent coming of the Antichrist. What do I mean by this? What I mean by saying this is that Satan has had a man, the son of perdition, ready for every time since the *first* coming of Jesus Christ. The apostle John said, *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby (ὅθεν, whereupon, from hence) we know that it is the last time.* (1Jn.2.18) As we read in the Thessalonian text above, the Antichrist has a certain time. *...that he might be revealed in his time, or, in his due time.* (2Th.2.6) There is a Divine order for the coming of both the Antichrist and the Lord Jesus Christ. When the time is right Antichrist will come, and then the true Christ of God, our Lord Jesus shall come. The Antichrist may come at any time, but he must come first in the order of things, and then follows the glorious appearing of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

The saints of God should expect to see the man of sin, the Antichrist. It's a dreadful consideration, but it's only a secondary consideration to the fact that our Lord Jesus is coming again. He hasn't come yet and we should not allow our faith to be shaken or troubled when folks say otherwise. By the word of God we know better than they.

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Let us agree with God. That means, let us agree with the word of God and the doctrine which is derived from this Bible. Let us learn to express the same message, the same doctrine, the same faith as that which the apostle John expressed in his letter to the seven churches in the book of Revelation (cf. Re.22.20) *'Even so, according to the manner which you have revealed in your most holy word, Come, Lord Jesus.*

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