

The Man of Lawlessness  
2 Thessalonians 2:3-12

## Introduction

This morning we return to 2 Thessalonians 2. I know the last three sermons in this series have been quite detailed and therefore either a bit overwhelming, a bit confusing, or both. It would be a lot simpler for me to just state what I believe is being said in the passage, but that would only leave it as my opinion, and my opinion is not something upon which you should build your own convictions upon. That is why I have taken the time to carefully explain the details in the first four verses of 2 Thessalonians 2 including the different common interpretations you will find in commentaries along with their strengths and weaknesses. Since the text of my sermon notes is posted on our website, that also gives you the ability to carefully go over those details to come to your own conviction. While I do not disparage those who have come to different conclusions than I have, I do believe that my understanding of this passage is strongly supported by the grammar of the text, its context and related passages. The questions that I have brought up in examining the text need to be answered by any view proposed.

This morning we will be looking at more of the detail about the man of lawlessness who is introduced in verse 3. In order to understand who this is and his significance, I need to quickly review what we have covered so far. I will begin as I have in the previous sermons by reading through 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 translating it a little more literally and pointing out particular Greek words and grammar. This will be different from most English translations which use the same English word for different Greek words. Follow along in your own Bible and note the differences.

<sup>1</sup> Now we request of you, brethren, concerning the παρουσία / parousia (presence / appearing) of the Lord of us, Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him<sup>2</sup> that you not be quickly shaken from the mind nor to be troubled neither by a spirit, nor by a word, nor by a letter as if by us, as that the day of the Lord ἐνέστηκεν / enestāken (has arrived and is present - ΠΑΙΣ of ἐνίστημι / enistāmi).<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you in any manner, for [it has not arrived and is present] if not first the apostasy ἔλθῃ / elthā (has come - ΑΑSub3S of ἔρχομαι / erchomai) and the man of lawlessness ἀποκαλύφθῃ / apokaluphthā (is revealed), the son of the destruction,<sup>4</sup> the one in opposition and exalting himself above all being called god or object of worship, so that in the temple of God he sits down publically showing himself that he is God.<sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that yet being with you I was saying this to you?<sup>6</sup> And you have known the one now restraining him so that he is ἀποκαλύφθῆναι / apokaluphthānai (revealed - ΑΠInf) in his time<sup>7</sup> for the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he who is restraining at this moment until he goes out of the midst,<sup>8</sup> And then will be ἀποκαλύφθηται / apokaluphthētai (revealed - FPI3S) the lawless one whom the Lord will execute by the spirit of the mouth of him and he will cause him to cease by the ἐπιφάνεια / epiphania (glorious manifestation) of the παρουσία / parousia (appearance / presence) of Him.<sup>9</sup> The παρουσία / parousia (appearance / presence) of whom is in accordance with the Satan in all power and signs and lying wonders,<sup>10</sup> and in all deception of unrighteousness to those perishing because they did not accept the love of the truth so that they be saved.<sup>11</sup> And for this reason God sends to them power of delusion so that they believe the lie,<sup>12</sup> in order that they may be condemned all the ones not believing.”

## Review

I will be summarizing these verses along with some of the reasons for my understanding of them without detail of other possible views. You will need to go back to the previous sermons to see those details.

This passage begins with Paul making a request of the Thessalonians that they not be shaken in mind or disturbed due to a false teaching presented as if coming from the Spirit or from them that they were already in the day of the Lord. This false teaching was causing them to be agitated, vacillating and upset in their thinking and be in a state of fear with a troubled mind.

Paul's emphasis here is that they were being given a false teaching that they were in the day of the Lord. That is the proper meaning of the Greek word here (ἐνίστημι / enistāmi), which literally means to "stand in." This is also the unstated apodosis of the conditional sentence of verse 3 which you can recognize in most translations because it will be either in italics or brackets to indicate that is material added by the translators to try to make the sentence make sense in English. The added apodosis in most versions is something like "*the day of the Lord will not come,*" but it would be much more accurate for this to be "*the day of the Lord is not present*" since that is the proper meaning of the Greek verb being referenced. The conditional sentence of verse 3 then is "*Let no one deceive you in any manner, for [the day of the Lord is not present] if the apostasy has not come first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of the destruction.*" Or to state it in the classic "if - then" form of a conditional sentence, "If the apostasy has not come first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, then the day of the Lord is not present."

The phrase, *day of the Lord*, is used many times in the Scriptures, and the particular meaning of it is determined by its context. Here in 2 Thessalonians it is directly tied to the "*the παρουσία / parousia (appearance / presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him*" in verse 1, which in turn directly ties directly to Paul's teaching about it in 1 Thessalonians 5. Therefore we also know that the day of the Lord "*will come just like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape* (1Thessalonians 5:2-3). It will not overtake believers like a thief because they are not in darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Believers will not be subject to the wrath of God that will be part of it for they are destined for salvation and not wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10). And finally, the day of the Lord is not present unless the apostasy has occurred first and the man of lawlessness is revealed.

What does Paul mean by saying the apostasy must come first? The Greek word itself, ἀποστασία / apostasia, is a compound word using the preposition ἀπο / apo, which refers to a separation of some kind, joined with στάσις / stasis which arises from the verb root, ἵστημι / histāmi, which is the word for stand. So its root meaning is to "*stand separate from.*" Liddel & Scott define it primarily as "*defection, revolt*" and secondarily as "*departure, disappearance.*" It is context that determines what is being rebelled against or departed from. What then does the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 indicate?

First, the grammar in the verse demands an event that would have been clearly identifiable to the Thessalonians since it is "*the apostasy*" and not "an apostasy." Second, the immediate context in verse 1 is the "*the παρουσία / parousia (appearance / presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.*" This is not an extraneous phrase. Paul uses it to tie the rapture directly to the day of the Lord and is the contextual clue that lets us know "*the apostasy*" is a reference to the departure of the saints, both those asleep in Jesus and those remaining alive, from the earth to be gathered together to meet the Lord in the air as Paul had already instructed them in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. References to this being a departure from faith lack the necessary clarity since passages such as 1 Timothy 4:1 and Matthew 24 refer to an increasing "falling away" from the faith and not something specific enough to identify as "*the apostasy.*"

In short, Paul's argument here that they did not need to be troubled in any manner by the teaching they had received that they were in the day of the Lord because it was false both in fact and the claims of origin. Paul had already taught them that the rapture - being caught up and gathered together to meet the Lord in the air - would come just before or as the first event in the day of the Lord. The rapture had not occurred, therefore they were not in the day of the Lord.

## **The Identification of the Man of Lawlessness - 2 Thess. 2:3-5**

Paul states that the apostasy comes first and next in the sequence is that “*the man of lawlessness ἀποκαλύφθῆ / apokaluphthā (is revealed - APSub3S), the son of the destruction.*” This is followed in verses 4-12 with a further description of what he will do and the future events that will take place in relationship to him. I covered the identification of this man in my last sermon in this series.

From the prophecies in Daniel 9:24-27 we learned that he is the “*prince who is to come*” who arises from the people that destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple - the Roman empire. There are two points in the prophecy which identify this man. The first is the initial revelation that makes known what was hidden. This man will make a firm covenant with the Jewish people. Whatever that future covenant will be, it will include at least an assurance of safety for the Jewish people and their sacrificial system in the Temple. You cannot stop sacrifices that are not taking place, and the Jews cannot make sacrifices outside the temple. That means the Temple will have to be rebuilt and the sacrifices resumed. At present, though the nation of Israel is back in Jerusalem, it actually does not control the temple mount and no temple will be built there unless something radical happens. They simply do not want to start a religious war with the Muslims by rebuilding the temple. However, they have already prepared to construct it when the opportunity presents itself. If this does not happen sooner, then the covenant with this future prince will enable them to do that. The world leader that enables that to happen will be immediately identified according to Daniel’s prophecy as this man. This firm covenant begins the 70<sup>th</sup> week of years of Daniel’s prophecy. What will follow him is destruction.

The other point in Daniel’s prophecy which will identify this man is the setting up of the abomination of desolation spoken about in Daniel 9, 11, 12, Matthew 24, Mark 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2. This occurs 3 ½ years after the firm covenant is made in which he stops the sacrifice in the temple and blasphemes setting himself up as a god to be worshiped. Though he was revealed at the beginning of the prophetic week when he made the firm covenant, any possible doubt that this is the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, will be removed at that point. That is what Paul does in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 as he describes briefly this man’s actions and character which are given in detail in Daniel’s prophecies. In doing so he is making sure that the Thessalonians know whom he is talking about that will be revealed.

Here in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 Paul states this son of destruction *opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*” Paul then reminds them in verse 5, “*Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling these things.*” Paul was trained as a Pharisee and so would have been well acquainted with the book of Daniel from which this description arises.

As I pointed out in the previous sermon this man is the “*little horn*” in Daniel 7 that arises that makes great boasts that arises out of a ten nation confederacy and subdues three of the kings and speaks out against the Most High and has power for a time, times and half a time - 3 ½ years. Daniel 11:36-45 gives details about his actions including that he will “*exalt and magnify himself above every god,*” “*speak monstrous things against the God of gods,*” “*show no regard for the gods of his fathers,*” for “*the desire of women,*” or for “*any god,*” and he will “*magnify himself above them all*” and “*honor a god of fortresses.*” It is given to him to “*prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.*” The purpose of that indignation, and please understand that the indignation here is that of God, is described in the next chapter, Daniel 12:10-11, “*Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.*”<sup>11</sup> “*From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*”

When we eventually get into our study of the book of Revelation sometime next year, we will find this man of lawlessness is the “*beast out of the sea*” in Revelation 13 that blasphemes God and what is associated with Him and he makes war against the saints.

The man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, will be revealed when he makes a firm covenant with Israel. He is identified as the one who 3 ½ years later will stop the sacrifices and set up the abomination of desolation in the Temple. This is all in accordance with the prophecies in Daniel.

### **The Restrainer** - 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7

In 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 Paul introduces the restrainer as the explanation for why things are not yet as bad as they will be. The NASB translates this as <sup>6</sup> *And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.* <sup>7</sup> *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.*

Who or what is the one who is holding back or restraining what is to come? More than twenty opinions have been offered in commentaries ranging from the Roman empire or various rulers within it; missionaries preaching the gospel; the Jewish state; the binding of Satan; the church; Gentile world domination; governments; and various supernatural forces. Some of these ideas are ludicrous while others have some logical validity, but the answer is found in the gender of the two participles translated as restrain. The first in verse 6 is neuter - "what is restraining." And the second in first 7 is masculine - "he who is restraining." Yet both are referring to the same entity. Who or what is both neuter and masculine at the same time? The answer is the Holy Spirit, for the Greek word for spirit, πνεῦμα / pneuma, is neuter, while His other names and all pronouns used in reference to Him are masculine.

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth and has always been at work in people in enabling them to know and serve God and striving with man against sin as noted as early as Genesis 6:3. Throughout Judges it is the Spirit of the Lord that came upon a man who would then deliver Israel from its oppressor and then judge. But a hallmark throughout the period prior to the church age is that the Holy Spirit would come upon a person but might also depart from them as He did with king Saul. With the start of the Church age there were some changes in how the Holy Spirit ministers to people. Jesus explained in John 16:7-11, <sup>7</sup> *"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.* <sup>8</sup> *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; <sup>11</sup> and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."* In addition, as Jesus explained to the disciples in Acts 1:4-8, they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit and receive power when He came to be Jesus' witnesses throughout the world.

The Thessalonians understood Paul's reference to the Holy Spirit as the one who was restraining because he had taught them about it. They were also first hand witnesses of the Holy Spirit's work among them for they had received the gospel with joy in the Holy Spirit, understood that God given the Holy Spirit to them, and had been warned about the danger of quenching Him (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 4:8; and 5:19).

This combination of the Holy Spirit convicting the world and indwelling and empowering believers to proclaim the gospel and live for Christ has a strong influence that restrains the sin that would otherwise run amok throughout the world. That is the *"mystery of lawlessness that is already at work,"* yet remains largely hidden due to current restraint of the working of the Holy Spirit both directly and through believers. Throughout history and in our own time it is easily seen that there is an inverse relationship between Christian influence and sin. Sin increases when Christian influence declines and it wanes when Christian influence is strong. The moral degradation of our nation and society are due to the decline of Christianity within it.

I know that evil has increased so much in our own land and throughout the world that it is hard to reconcile that with it being restrained, yet we are only seeing a minimal amount compared to what will come in the future when that restraint is removed. The descriptions of even the early tribulation period is bad and it just gets worse. In quick succession comes conquering of nations, then war, followed by

economic collapse, then death of a quarter of the earth by sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts. The fifth seal is martyrdom of those that follow God. Matthew 24:10-12 describes the ascendancy of false religion along with treachery and most people's love growing cold because of lawlessness. The sixth seal begins with a great earthquake that moves every mountain and island along with signs in the heavens with the sun becoming black, the moon like blood and stars falling. It only gets worse from there as the beast and false prophet gain power.

Evil will increase when the Holy Spirit goes "out of the midst." This is not a departure from earth, but a moving out of the way that allows the mystery of lawlessness and the man of lawlessness to be revealed. The Holy Spirit will continue a ministry of bringing people to faith in Christ throughout the Tribulation. That is both the source for those that will be martyred and those that will survive it to populate the earth during the millennium.

When will the restrainer move out of the way? Both logically and in the context of the passage, that will occur when the church is raptured. The Holy Spirit is the one that restrains, but that ministry is closely tied to what He does in and through the church. When believers depart, that ministry will radically change.

### **The Activity & End of the Man of Lawlessness - 2 Thess. 2:8-10**

With the restrainer no longer blocking him, 2 Thessalonians 2:8 then continues that "*the lawless one will be revealed.*" Paul then continues with an encouragement about what will eventually happen to him before going back to describing what he will do after being revealed. God will tolerate evil for a time for the fulfillment of His own purposes, but He is a God of justice that will hold accountable those who do evil and execute judgment against them. The Lord will execute the man of lawlessness by the breath of His mouth and cause him to cease by His own glorious manifestation (ἐπιφάνεια / epiphania) at His appearing (παρουσία / parousia). That matches the description given later by the apostle John in Revelation 19. The one who is "*called Faithful and True*" and whose name is "*called the Word of God*" and has the name "*King of Kings and Lord of Lords*" written on His robe and thigh returns riding a white horse with the armies of heaven "*and from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He might smite the nations.*" The beast and the false prophet are seized and "*thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse*" (Revelation 19:11, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21). The man of lawlessness will do many evil deeds, but there is encouragement in knowing that justice will prevail upon him and all who practice evil and they will receive an eternal judgment.

Verses 9-10 then continues with a description of some of the actions that the son of destruction will take. First, the appearance of his presence (παρουσία / parousia) will be in accordance "*with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*<sup>10</sup> *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.*" This alludes to both the energizing source for these actions and the nature of the actions themselves. This man will be evil for he will be given over to Satan as was Judas (John 13:27) or the Pharisees who had the devil for their father who is liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). The actions themselves are Satanic in nature for it was by deception he got Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:13) and it is against the schemes of the devil that we must stand firm to this day (Ephesians 6:11).

It is by deception that Satan gets people to believe his expressions of power, signs and wonders. Matthew 24:24 specifically states that during this time "*false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.*" Revelation 13:11-15 gives specific examples of some of the power, signs and wonders that will be given to deceive people.<sup>11</sup> "*Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.*<sup>12</sup> *He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.*<sup>13</sup> *He performs great*

*signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.<sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.<sup>15</sup> And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”*

Satan uses powerful deceptions so as “to mislead, if possible, even the elect,” but the elect do not fall for it. Who does? Those that do not accept the love of the truth to be saved. These are the same ones Paul refers to in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 that “do not know God and those that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” They reject the truth about God and the good news of Jesus Christ, so they will not be saved.

### **The Delusion - 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12**

Paul concludes this section with God’s confirmation of judgment against those that reject the truth.<sup>11</sup> *“And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,<sup>12</sup> in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”*

God is very patient and longsuffering, but there comes a point in time in which He will confirm those who reject the truth in their rebellion. In Romans 1:18-32 the demonstration of God’s wrath abiding against ungodliness and those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness is His yielding them to their own desires allowing them to plummet into ever greater depths of sin. In Exodus 5-11 Pharaoh hardened his heart toward God and what He was doing six times before God finally hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not change. In 1 Kings 22 King Ahab has plenty of false prophets prophesying before him and King Jehoshaphat about how they would win their next battle against Aram. Then at the insistence of King Jehoshaphat one prophet of the Lord, Micaiah, was brought to them who told the truth about what would happen in the next battle and that the Lord had allowed a deceitful spirit to be put in the mouths of all the other prophets so that Ahab would listen to them and die in battle. The Kings had one prophet of the Lord and he told the truth, but they listened to the many false prophets anyway and King Ahab died in battle the next day. That is the way it will be for those during the tribulation who reject the truth while yielding themselves to the deluding influence of Satan’s many deceptions.

However, I must point out that what will happen then will only be a supernatural increase in intensity of what has occurred throughout history and is already widespread today. 2 Peter 2:1 warns about false teachers that will be around in the present time just like there was false prophets in ancient times. They “will secretly introduce destructive heresies” and would “malign the way of truth” and would “exploit you with false words.” Paul gives many warnings about false teachers, but in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 he explains a reason why they will have such success.<sup>3</sup> *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,<sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”* These false teachers are prevalent today openly filling the pulpits of countless churches including those claiming to be evangelical, and find great followings on what is supposedly Christian TV, radio and internet broadcasts. It will be much, much worse when the man of lawlessness arises.

How can you protect yourself against them? It is actually not as hard as you might think for God will aide those who love and seek the truth. 1 John 4:1-6 explains,<sup>1</sup> *“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.<sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;<sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world<sup>4</sup> You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the*

world.<sup>5</sup> *They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.*<sup>6</sup> *We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*”

Or to put all of this very succinctly from 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22.<sup>21</sup> *“But test everything; hold fast to that which is good; <sup>22</sup> abstain from every form of evil.”* How do you know what is good? It matches the character of God and is in harmony with this commands. Anything that does not is evil.

## **Conclusions**

Our society has radically changed in the last few years and especially in the last year and a half so that we now live in “upside down world,” yet as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we can take heart. Why? Because we know that the future is in the Lord’s hands and he will bring all of His promises to pass. Current events only reinforce that the stage is being set for the fulfillment of what has been prophesied. There will be some very nasty things that will come to pass after the man of lawlessness is revealed, but since God has not destined believers for wrath, but rather for obtaining salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that does not worry us. Instead, we recognize the danger and warn others to flee the wrath to come, repent and believe in Jesus while also being prepared for the persecution that comes upon all who strive to live godly in Christ Jesus. He is always with us and will never leave us. By the Holy Spirit God will enable us to fulfill the purpose for which He created us as we walk in trust of Him.

Sermon Notes - June 27, 2021  
The Man of Lawlessness, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12

### Introduction

Opinions may be helpful, but convictions need to arise from careful study of the \_\_\_\_\_ text

### Review

Paul does not want them to be shaken in mind or disturbed by thinking they were \_\_\_\_\_ the day of the Lord

The unstated apodosis of vs 3 comes from vs. 2 - "*the day of the Lord is not \_\_\_\_\_.*"

Paul ties the day of the Lord directly to the \_\_\_\_\_ (appearance) of Jesus & our gathering together to Him

Paul's teaching to the Thessalonians about the day of the Lord includes: \*It will come like a \_\_\_\_\_ in the night, \*It will not overtake believers for they are not in darkness, \*Believers are not subject to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God that will be in it, \*It is not present unless the apostasy comes first & the man of lawlessness is revealed.

Apostasy (ἀποστασία / apostasia) is a compound word meaning to "stand \_\_\_\_\_ from" - rebel / depart

Context determines meaning - context here demands a clearly identifiable \_\_\_\_\_ - "*the apostasy*"

Immediate context ties this to the \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 1 & 1 Thess. 4:13-18) - the saints departure from earth

They could not be in the day of the Lord for they had not been caught up & \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus - the rapture

### The Identification of the Man of Lawlessness - 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5

From Daniel 9:24-27 we learn this man is first revealed when he makes a firm \_\_\_\_\_ with the Jews

He is further identified as the man that will set up the \_\_\_\_\_ of desolation (Dan 9, 11, 12; Matt 24)

Paul had already taught them these things that are in \_\_\_\_\_ prophecies about the man of lawlessness

He is the "little horn" of Daniel 7, and Daniel 11:36-45 give \_\_\_\_\_ about his actions

He will prosper until God's indignation that \_\_\_\_\_ & purifies Israel is finished (Daniel 11:36; 12:10-11)

### The Restrainer - 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7

There are many opinions, but only the \_\_\_\_\_ can be referred to with both neuter & masculine nouns

Genesis 6:3 - The Holy Spirit strives with man and He \_\_\_\_\_ the world of sin, righteousness & judgment

Prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would come upon a person but could also \_\_\_\_\_

In the church age, the Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ & stays with believers enabling them to know, grow & serve God

The Thessalonians understood Paul's reference having first hand \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit's ministry

The Holy Spirit's direct convicting and His empowering of believers is a strong influence that \_\_\_\_\_ sin

Throughout history there has been an \_\_\_\_\_ relationship between prevalence of sin & Christian influence

Current evil actions are \_\_\_\_\_ compared to what happens in the Tribulation (Rev. 6-18; Matt. 24)

Evil increases when the Holy Spirit goes "out of the \_\_\_\_\_" - makes way for the man of lawlessness to come

Both logically & contextually this will happen at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church & the Spirit changes His ministry



## The Activity & End of the Man of Lawlessness - 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10

Paul explains the \_\_\_\_\_ of the man of lawlessness before describing what he will do after he is revealed  
The description in 2 Thess. 2:8 matches that of \_\_\_\_\_  
His actions are \_\_\_\_\_ in origin and nature for Satan has always been a deceiver (Gen. 3:13; Eph. 6:11)  
Satan and the man of lawlessness will use \_\_\_\_\_ to sway people to sin - Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:11-15  
The deceptions are strong, but the \_\_\_\_\_ do not fall for them, but those do not accept the truth will fall

## The Delusion - 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

God is patient & longsuffering, but He will eventually \_\_\_\_\_ a person in their rebellion.  
In Romans 1:18-32, God's wrath is demonstrated by His yielding people to their increasing \_\_\_\_\_ desires  
In Exodus 5-11; Pharaoh hardened his own heart \_\_\_\_\_ times before God confirmed him in it & hardened him  
In 1 Kings 22, the kings followed the advice of the \_\_\_\_\_ prophets even after Micaiah told them the truth  
There will be a future supernatural increase in the intensity of false teaching - but that also occurs \_\_\_\_\_  
You protect yourself from false teaching by \_\_\_\_\_ what is taught by the Scriptures (1 John 4:1-6)  
What is good will match the character of \_\_\_\_\_ & His commands - what is evil will not

## Conclusions

We live in "upside down world," yet take heart because our \_\_\_\_\_ is in the Lord's hands  
Believers \_\_\_\_\_ for the nasty events that occur after the man of lawlessness is revealed  
We are to warn those that do not believe to \_\_\_\_\_ the wrath to come - repent & believe on the Lord Jesus

**KIDS KORNER** – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many times "the man of lawlessness" is mentioned. Talk to your parents about why this man is so evil - and how you can avoid being influenced by evil people.

**THINK ABOUT IT** – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Why do you think there is such diversity in the interpretation of 2 Thessalonians? How can you can confidence to know the correct interpretation? Summarize Paul's concern for the Thessalonians and how he removed their reason for being troubled in mind and disturbed? What is the connection between the day of the Lord and "*the παρουσία / parousia (appearance / presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.*" What does Paul teach in 1 & 2 Thessalonians concerning the day of the Lord? What is the meaning of apostasy? Why does the grammar and context support this being a reference to the rapture? If you believe this is a falling away from the faith, what specific falling away is Paul referring to and who would that fit his description of the day of the Lord? Who is the man of lawlessness? What is the relationship between what Paul says about him in 2 Thess. 2 and the prophecies of Daniel? According to Daniel 9:24-27, what will he do that will reveal his identity. What will he do half way through the seven year Tribulation period? Why is that significant? Why does Paul refer to it in 2 Thess. 2? How does the text lead to the conclusion that the one who restrains is the Holy Spirit instead of any of the many other suggestions about it? How does the Holy Spirit restrain sin in the present time? What will change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit after the church is raptured? How will that allow the man of lawlessness to be revealed? What will eventually happen to the man of lawlessness? When will that happen? How does the man of lawlessness demonstrate that he is "in accord with the activity of Satan"? Upon whom does God send a deluding influence? Why does he do that? Has he done that in the past? How can you protect yourself against Satan's schemes and deceptions? What should tell others about this?