



Old Testament Reading –Isaiah 34:1-8
New Testament Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

The Glorious Return of Christ
“The Beginning of the End # 1”
2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

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The purpose of Apostle Paul’s second letter to the Christians at Thessalonica was to assure them they had not missed:

- **The return of Christ**, to which he referred as the **“coming of the Lord,”** nor:
- **The rapture of the Church**, to which he referred as the **“gathering together to Him.”**
- Paul said he did not want them to be **“shaken in mind or troubled”** by the events of the world, or the persecution they were enduring, because the Day of the Lord could not come until two major events occurred.

Sadly, the rise in unrest has caused many of God’s people to lose hope; or even question the promise of our Lord to deliver us from this world before God’s wrath is released.

- From a human perspective, it appears our society is falling apart, with the anarchists tearing our nation apart, the globalists pushing for a New World Order, and the

churches dying or the pulpits silent on the fundamental issues.

- From God's perspective, the end-time events are all falling into place just as God ordained them to be at this time. God is shaking us up to wake us up, so we will grow up and look up, for our redemption draweth nigh.

1. The Day of the Lord – 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – “*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.*”

The “Day of the Lord” Paul referred to is a time that is to come when God will either directly or indirectly interject Himself into the timeline of human history and carry out the final prophetic events that will bring this age to a close, concluding with the return of Christ to this earth.

- In the Old Testament, the prophets referred to the Day of the Lord as a combination of expectation and consternation. Isaiah 13:6, Ezekiel 30:3, Joel 3:14
- In the New Testament, the writers referred to the Day of the Lord as a combination of adjudication and devastation. Acts 2:20, 2 Peter 3:10, 1 Corinthians 5:5
- According to Romans 11:26, the Day of the Lord will also be a day of salvation, as God will keep His promise to Abraham to save a remnant of his bloodline.

Before the Day of the Lord concludes with Christ's return to the earth, there will be a seven-year period known as “Jacob's Trouble,” or as we call it, “The Tribulation,” when all of the remaining prophecies involved in God's plan of redemption will be fulfilled, and His wrath is released upon those who refused His love and His grace.

The Greek word for Tribulation can also be translated as “Tribulum,” which described a threshing sledge where grain was thrashed to release the kernel from the stalk.



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- In Isaiah 2:17, the prophet said, on the Day of the Lord, “***The arrogance of man will be brought low, and the pride of man will be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.***”
 - The Day of the Lord will begin with great tribulation, but it will end 42 months later with Christ's glorification.

The Apostle Paul assured the Thessalonians that two major events would precede the Day of the Lord.

2. The Great Falling Away – Verse 3 – *“For that day will not come unless the falling away comes first.”*

The term “falling away” is an English translation of the Greek word “apostasia,” which could have several meanings.

- Some scholars connect it with the rapture, or with a great rebellion against God.
- However, when the word is viewed in its context, “apostasia” means to fall away from the true faith and to embrace a false faith.
- Paul said before the Antichrist can be revealed and the Day of the Lord begins, multitudes of those who once embraced the truth about Jesus Christ and claimed to be born-again will deliberately and intentionally turn away from the true gospel and embrace the lie of false religion.
- In 1 Timothy 4:1-3, and 2 Timothy 3:1-7, the Apostle Paul warned Timothy of what to watch for to indicate the time had come for such a falling away, and those same characteristics describe the culture of our day.
- Even in the West, where Christianity was once very strong, and basic morality and courtesy was common, vulgarity and rudeness are the norms, even among many who claim to be born-again Christians.
- According to the latest State of Theology Survey, **30% of those who identified as evangelicals do not believe Jesus Christ was truly God in the flesh**, which means He could not have been our Savior, which means we are still dead in our trespasses and sins, and without hope.
- The majority of evangelicals have drifted from the truth of God’s Word. Some have even replaced the gospel with non-biblical subjects such as “The Critical Race Theory,” “Social Justice Issues,” and Intersectionality.”
- The evidence that we are in the last days of the church age is that theologically-liberal churches have developed their form of the gospel, but it is void of the power of God, and until we return to the true gospel, the falling away from the true faith will continue down the road to apostasy.

3. The Restrainer Removed – Verse 6-7 – *“And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 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, and then the lawless one will be revealed.”*

While there are several opinions regarding the identity of the restrainer, I am convinced Paul was referring to the power and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- Since the restrainer was already at work in Paul's day, he could not be a human entity that would arise in the last days.
- Since no man nor organization of man can bind Satan from his work, only the Holy Spirit can prevent the arrival of the Antichrist until the specific time God has ordained.
- However, once the restrainer is removed, Satan will bring the Antichrist to power immediately.

Throughout the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is always referred to as "He," not an "it!"

- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune-Godhead, who hovered over the waters, created everything out of nothing, and brought light out of darkness and order out of disorder.
- Throughout the Old Testament, while the Holy Spirit was the agent of regeneration of everyone who believed in God, He only gifted certain individuals for a specific service – prophets, priests, and kings.
- However, in the New Testament, God the Father "poured out" His Spirit on those 120 followers of Christ, empowering them to share the gospel with the people who had come to the city of Jerusalem for the observance of Pentecost.
- Three thousand people expressed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, sealing their relationship with Christ until the day of redemption and empowering them to live for Christ until then.
- Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church, that body of true believers, to which Paul referred as the temple of the Holy Spirit, when all the spirit-filled believers are removed from the earth by the rapture, so the Holy Spirit will also be removed.
- The Restrainer is the Holy Spirit Who indwells the Church.
- Therefore, when the Church is removed via the Rapture, so will be the Restrainer of evil.