

# **The Day of the LORD, the Restrainer, and The Man of Lawlessness in 2-Thessalonians 2:1-12**

Prepared by Phillip D. Mosher

**2-Thessalonians 2 is one of the strongest New Testament passage supporting the belief in the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church, also called the Imminent Return of our Lord.**

## **A Review**

In Daniel 9 we read that Daniel gained an understanding of Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70-year captivity in Babylon (Jer. 29:10; see also 2 Chr. 36:15-24). This caused Daniel to pray and the angel Gabriel came to deliver to Daniel the prophecy of 70 weeks. Let's think of this 70 weeks being tracked on a timer-clock.

1. How many years do these 70 weeks represent? **490 lunar years**
2. When does the timer start? **When the decree goes out to restore Jerusalem**
3. Is there a pause in the running of the timer, and if so when? **After 69 of the weeks**
4. What transpires after the completion of 69 weeks?  
**Messiah is cut off and Jerusalem is destroyed by the people of the coming prince**
5. When does the timer start to run again?  
**When the coming prince makes a treaty with many, the 70<sup>th</sup> week begins**
6. What happens in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week? **The prince breaks the treaty**
7. These 70 weeks are for the church, or Israel, or both? **Daniel's people, Israel**

## **The Day of the LORD [YHWH] in prophecy** ("the day of the Lord has come" v2)

Though prophetic references to the Day of the LORD are extensive, Isaiah 13:6-13; Joel 2:1-11; 3:14-16; Zephaniah 1:7 - 2:3; Matthew 24:9-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; Acts 2:20; and 2 Peter 3:10 are cited as examples. The books of Joel and Zephaniah are two books that prophesy exclusively about this coming Day. "Day," as used in these passages, does not mean a twenty-four hour day but speaks more of an occasion, an event, a season, and an opportunity, having nothing to do with a calendar day or a clock. It is the time when the Lord Jesus Christ comes on the scene to perform His part in prophesied events. He will bring judgment and take control on earth.

As stated on my chart entitled "The Day of the LORD," this "day" begins sometime after the Rapture of the Church, includes the seventieth week of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27, and the reign of Christ, when the Lord assumes the seat of David as King of kings and Lord of lords and rules over the whole world. 2 Peter 3:10 teaches us that the Day of the LORD includes the final judgment when the earth and elements will be completely destroyed, so it begins during the Tribulation and ends with the final judgment.

The major purposes of the Day of the LORD relate to Israel: 1) To bring that nation to repentance and acceptance of the Messiah Jesus, bringing that nation back into fellowship with God (Daniel 12:1-7; Ezekiel 20:33-38; and Matthew 23:37), and 2) To bring about the evangelization of the world by 144,000 Jews during the Tribulation (Daniel's the Seventieth-Week, see Daniel 9:27; Revelation 7:1-17; and Matthew 24:14). Also, during The Day of the LORD, God's judgment will be poured out on the nations of the world for their sinfulness and

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their mistreatment of His chosen people, the Jews; and God will cleanse the world of sin and bring to fulfillment His promises to Israel by establishing His Son on the throne of David forever.<sup>a</sup>

### 2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB95) In a Chiastic Structure

#### A. Comforting words

<sup>1</sup> Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, <sup>2</sup> 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.

#### B. Lawless one revealed

<sup>3</sup> Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy<sup>b</sup> comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

#### X Lawless one restrained

<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.

#### B' Lawless one revealed

<sup>8</sup> 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; <sup>9</sup> *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord 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. <sup>11</sup> For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will 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.

#### A' Comforting Words

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter

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<sup>a</sup> Daniel 7:23-27

<sup>b</sup> Z-646 ἀποστασία *apostasía*; . . . to depart. Departure, apostasy. Occurs in Acts 21:21 translated "forsake" and in 2 Thess. 2:3, "a falling away". From: Zodhiates, S. (c.2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers

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from us. <sup>16</sup> 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, <sup>17</sup> comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

### **The Restrainer** (quotes from NASB)

Verse 6 states: “you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed,” confirms that verse 3 is speaking of a departure, which we believe to be the Church, the Body of Christ.<sup>c</sup> The Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church is the “restrainer.” He works through the Body of Christ to restrain lawlessness and the spirit of anti-Christ, who is already at work in the world, and his coming to power on earth.<sup>d</sup> The Rapture of the Church comes before the “Man of Lawlessness” can be revealed to perform his wicked deeds.

### **The Man of Lawlessness**

This is the “little horn” in Daniel 7:8, 20-21, 25, the coming “prince” Daniel 9:27 (a descendant of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD), and the “beast” in Revelation 13:5-6. This man is commonly referred to as the “anti-Christ.”

### **2-Thessalonians 2:1-12 (WUEST translation of the NT<sup>e</sup>):**

<sup>1-4</sup> Now, I am requesting you, brethren, with regard to the coming and personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, even our being assembled together to Him, not soon to become unsettled, the source of this unsettled state being your minds, neither be thrown into confusion, either by a spirit [a believer in the Christian assembly claiming the authority of divine revelation and claiming to give the saints a word from God], or through a word [received personally] as from us or through a letter falsely alleged to be written by us, to the effect that the **day of the Lord** has come and is now present. Do not begin to allow anyone to lead you astray in any way, because **that day** shall not come except the aforementioned [1] **departure** [of the Church to heaven] [2] comes first and the **man of the lawlessness** is disclosed [in his true identity], the son of perdition, he who sets himself in opposition to and exalts himself above everyone and everything that is called a god or that is an object of worship, so that he seats himself in the inner sanctuary of God, proclaiming himself to be deity.

<sup>5-7</sup> Do you not remember that while I was still with you I kept on telling you these things? And now you know with a positive assurance that which [namely, the departure of the Church, the saints being assembled together to the Lord] is **preventing** his being disclosed [as to his true identity] in his strategic, appointed time, <sup>7</sup> for the mystery of the aforementioned lawlessness is now operating. Only He [the Holy Spirit] who is **holding** [the lawlessness] down, [will do so] until He goes out from the midst [of humanity].

<sup>8-12</sup> And then shall the Lawless One be disclosed [in his true identity], whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth and render inoperative by the sudden appearance of His personal presence, the coming and presence of whom [the man of lawlessness] is according to the operation of Satan in the

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<sup>c</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13 (important to memorize)

<sup>d</sup> 1 John 4:3

<sup>e</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S., *The New Testament : An expanded translation of the Greek New Testament*, 1956-59 © 1961, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI (from Logos Bible Software electronic edition, 1997)

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sphere of miracles demonstrating power and attesting miracles and miracles of a startling, imposing, amazement-wakening character which deceive, and whose coming and presence is in the sphere of every kind of wicked deception geared to [the gullibility of] those who are perishing, [this gullibility being] caused by the fact that they did not accept the love for the truth to the end that they might be saved. And because of this God sends them a deluding influence resulting in their believing the lie, in order that they all might be judged who did not believe the truth but took delight in wickedness.

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### TRANSLATING 2<sup>nd</sup> THESSALONIANS 2:3

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II Thessalonians 2:1-12 (NASB - 1995):

<sup>1</sup> Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy <sup>f</sup> comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>g</sup> <sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? <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;<sup>h</sup> only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. <sup>8</sup> 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; <sup>9</sup> that is, the one whose coming is in accord 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. <sup>11</sup> For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will 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.

**646.** ἀποστασία *apostasia*; from 868; *defection, revolt*:—apostasy(1), forsake(1).

**647.** ἀποστάσιον *apostasion*; from 868; *a forsaking, spec. (bill of) divorce*:—certificate of divorce(1), divorce(2).<sup>i</sup>

**668.** ἀποφεύγω *apopheugō*; from 575 and 5343; *to flee from*:—escape(1), escaped(2).

S-646 ἀποστασία [*apostasia* /ap-os-tas-ee-ah/] n f. Feminine of the same as 647; . . . ; Two occurrences; AV translates as “to forsake + 575” once, and “falling away” once. 1 a falling away, defection, apostasy.

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<sup>f</sup> ἀποστασία

<sup>g</sup> Dan 7:8, 20-21, 25, & 9:27

<sup>h</sup> 1 John 4:3

<sup>i</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries : Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998).

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S-647 ἀποστάσιον [*apostasion* /ap-os-tas-ee-on/] n. Neuter of a (presumed) adj . . .; Three occurrences; AV translates as “divorcement” twice, and “writing of divorcement” once. **1** divorce, repudiation. **2** a bill of divorce.<sup>j</sup>

Z-646 ἀποστασία *apostasía*; . . . to depart. Departure, apostasy. Occurs in Acts 21:21 translated “forsake” and in 2 Thess. 2:3, “a falling away”.<sup>k</sup>

Acts 21:21 (NASB - 1995):

. . . they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake [ἀποστασίαν] Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

Divorce: Matthew 5:31, 19:7 and Mark 10:4 = βιβλίον ἀποστασίου in both, meaning a sending away, a departure (in this case it is the wife who was sent away by the husband). See S-647 above.

II Thessalonians 2:1-12 (WUEST – NT<sup>l</sup>):

<sup>1-4</sup> Now, I am requesting you, brethren, with regard to the coming and personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, even our being assembled together to Him, not soon to become unsettled, the source of this unsettled state being your minds, neither be thrown into confusion, either by a spirit [a believer in the Christian assembly claiming the authority of divine revelation and claiming to give the saints a word from God], or through a word [received personally] as from us or through a letter falsely alleged to be written by us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come and is now present. Do not begin to allow anyone to lead you astray in any way, because that day shall not come except the aforementioned departure [of the Church to heaven] comes first and the man of the lawlessness is disclosed [in his true identity], the son of perdition, he who sets himself in opposition to and exalts himself above everyone and everything that is called a god or that is an object of worship, so that he seats himself in the inner sanctuary of God, proclaiming himself to be deity.

<sup>5-7</sup> Do you not remember that while I was still with you I kept on telling you these things? And now you know with a positive assurance that which [namely, the departure of the Church, the saints being assembled together to the Lord] is preventing his being disclosed [as to his true identity] in his strategic, appointed time, <sup>7</sup> for the mystery of the aforementioned lawlessness is now operating. Only He [the Holy Spirit] who is holding [the lawlessness] down, [will do so] until He goes out from the midst [of humanity].

<sup>8-12</sup> And then shall the Lawless One be disclosed [in his true identity], whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth and render inoperative by the sudden appearance of His personal presence, the coming and presence of whom [the man of lawlessness] is according to the operation of Satan in the sphere of miracles demonstrating power and attesting miracles and miracles of a startling, imposing, amazement-wakening character which deceive, and whose coming and presence is in the sphere of every kind of wicked deception geared to [the gullibility of] those who are perishing, [this gullibility being] caused

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<sup>j</sup> S - 646 and S - 647 are from: Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible* (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

<sup>k</sup> Z - 646 is from Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

<sup>l</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1961). *The New Testament : An expanded translation*. 1956-59, under title: Expanded translation of the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (from electronic edition)

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by the fact that they did not accept the love for the truth to the end that they might be saved. And because of this God sends them a deluding influence resulting in their believing the lie, in order that they all might be judged who did not believe the truth but took delight in wickedness.

Other Translations and the Greek:

II Thessalonians 2:3 (KJV):

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;

II Thessalonians 2:3 (NKJV):

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,

II Thessalonians 2:3 (NIV):

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

II Thessalonians 2:3 (ASV):

Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,

II Thessalonians 2:3 (ESV):

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,

II Thessalonians 2:3 (NA27INT<sup>m</sup>):

μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ  
not anyone ye may deceive in any way, because unless comes the  
ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας,  
departure firstly, and is revealed the man (of) lawlessness,  
ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,  
the son (of) destruction,

Verse 6: “you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed,” confirms that verse 3 is speaking of a departure, which we believe to be the Church, the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit working through those baptized by Him into the Body of Christ, the true followers of Jesus are united in one body by the Holy Spirit and that body is the “restrainer.”

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<sup>m</sup> *The Greek New Testament* (4th ed.). Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Societies. Aland, B., Aland, K., Black, M., Martini, C. M., Metzger, B. M., & Wikgren, A. (1993, c1979). English translation added by PDM.

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### Day of the Lord – Search from Logos Bible Software



English Standard Version 25 results

Isa	13: 6	Wail, for the	day of the LORD	is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will c
	9	Behold, the	day of the LORD	comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to mal
	58: 13	ly day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy	day of the LORD	honorable; if you honor it, not going your own w
Jer	46: 10	That day is the	day of the LORD	God of hosts, a day of vengeance, to avenge him
Ezek	13: 5	house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the	day of the LORD	.
	30: 3	For the day is near, the	day of the LORD	is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom
Joel	1: 15	Alas for the day! For the	day of the LORD	is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it c
	2: 1	Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the	day of the LORD	is coming; it is near,
	11	at; he who executes his word is powerful. For the	day of the LORD	is great and very awesome; who can endure it?
	31	he moon to blood, before the great and awesome	day of the LORD	comes.
	3: 14	udes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the	day of the LORD	is near in the valley of decision.
Amos	5: 18	Woe to you who desire the	day of the LORD	! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is d
		sire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the	day of the LORD	? It is darkness, and not light,
	20	Is not the	day of the LORD	darkness, and not light, and gloom with no bright
Obad	15	For the	day of the LORD	is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it
Zeph	1: 7	Be silent before the Lord God! For the	day of the LORD	is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and cor
	8	And on the	day of the LORD's	sacrifice— 'I will punish the officials and the king
	14	The great	day of the LORD	is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the
		is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the	day of the LORD	is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.
Mal	4: 5	Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome	day of the LORD	comes.
Acts	2: 20	ed to darkness and the moon to blood, before the	day of the LORD	comes, the great and magnificent day.
1 Cor	5: 5	of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the	day of the LORD	.
1 Thess	5: 2	For you yourselves are fully aware that the	day of the LORD	will come like a thief in the night.
2 Thess	2: 2	tter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the	day of the LORD	has come.
2 Pet	3: 10	But the	day of the LORD	will come like a thief, and then the heavens will p