


2 Thessalonians 2:1-8

The Apostasy and The Restrainer Part 1




2nd Thessalonians 2

It's the Antichrist, Stupid

Once again, recently, I had an ex-pretribber write me and share his encouraging epiphany of how the Truth was under his nose all this time in 2 Thessalonians 2. Paul makes it explicitly clear that the Church will see the revelation of Antichrist. This text is the most commonly cited when I read prewrath "testimonies."

How someone reads the following passage and concludes that the rapture occurs *before* the revelation of Antichrist is a lesson in how Tradition prevents many believers from seeing the Truth.

http://www.prewrathrapture.com/2009/11/its_the_antichriststupid.php

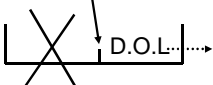



What's The Issue?

2 Thess 2:3 Let no one in any deceive you, for it is not present unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed...

2 Thess 2:4 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.

Daniel 9:27 – abomination of desolation -midpoint




 **2nd Thessalonians 2:1-2** Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed wither by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the **day of the Lord has come**


➤ Coming of our Lord and gathering = 1st Thess 4:17

Day of The Lord→

➤ **enest hken** = perfect tense “is present” Louw-Nida

 **2 Thess 2:3** 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, **“it is not present”**


➤ “Circumstances here justify a present tense in the apodosis, however, the carry-over thought from **enest hken**...Other NT combinations of **ean...pr wt on** (Matt 12:29; Mark 3:27; John 7:51; Rom 15:24) reveal preference elsewhere for a present tense apodosis under similar circumstances” (Thomas,323)

 **1st Seal: Rev 6:2** I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. (“It means the rise of sinister figures in Rev 6:2,4,...” TDNT 2:679)

2nd Seal: Rev 6:3-4 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.” And another, a red horse went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.


1 Thess 5:3 D.O.L comes while people say “Peace and safety”

Apostasy, M.O.L. →

 **The Description of Antichrist**


2 Thess 2:3-4 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it cannot be present** unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 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.

Middle voice “for himself” = verse 4
 Passive voice “he is revealed” verses 3, 6, 8

 **The Description of Antichrist**

“The clause that constitutes our verse 4 sits in apposition to the twofold description of the Rebel that has preceded (“the lawless one/doomed to destruction”). Thus what Paul does next is to describe the Rebel’s activities in a way that offers the divine reason for his doom” (Gordon Fee, NICNT).

(regarding verse 8) “It is only then, after the restrainer has been removed, that the ‘lawless one’ will be revealed” (Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistle to The Thessalonians*, 229).

 **The Timing Indicators**

2 Thess 2:5-8 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time **he will be revealed**. 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. 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;

until = ewV
 Then = kai tote “a point of time subsequent to another point of time – then” (Louw-Nida 67.46)

The Antichrist's Destruction

2 Thess 2:8 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;

Prewrath View: The Antichrist is "handcuffed" or "paralyzed" at Christ's parousia and eventually destroyed at the battle of Armageddon (Van Kampen, *The Sign*, 315, 326, 496).

The Antichrist's Destruction

2 Thess 2:8 whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;


Isaiah 11:4 and He will strike the land with the word of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the ungodly

anair ew (anēl ei)= destroy, slay
katapgew = abolish, do away with

"...so that the rest of Paul's sentence functions in very much the same way that synonymous parallelism does... That this is a poetic moment is demonstrated both by the redundancy of this clause in its own right, and by the (otherwise unnecessary) amplification of the 'coming' itself" (Fee, NICNT).


The Antichrist's Destruction

Revelation 16:12-14 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God...



2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 Summary

1. The Thessalonians could not have been living during the day of the Lord because the apostasy and man of lawlessness inaugurate its inception.
2. The man of lawlessness is not revealed by setting himself into the temple. This is merely a description (apposition) of who the man of lawlessness is.
3. The timing of the revelation of the man of lawlessness is tied to the removal of the restrainer.
4. 2 Thess 2:8 teaches that Antichrist is destroyed at the parousia, not handcuffed as Prewrath maintains.
5. If the Antichrist is handcuffed at the rapture according to the Prewrath scheme, he could not gather the nations to Armageddon in Rev. 16:14-16.




When Is The "Rebellion?"

2 Thess 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it is not present** unless **the apostasy** comes first

Prewrath View: The future apostasy will be a Jewish one that will start at the beginning of the 70th week and will last thru the first 5 seals (Rosenthal, Prewrath Rapture, 197-202; Van Kampen, The Sign, 138).

Difficulty: Prewrath teaches that the Antichrist will be revealed at the midpoint of the tribulation, yet the apostasy will start at the 70th week's inception.



When Is The "Rebellion?"

2 Thess 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it is not present** unless **the apostasy** comes **first** and the man of lawlessness is revealed.

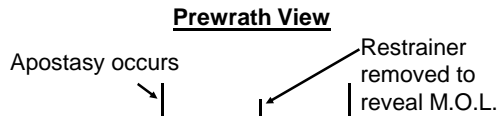
"...the coming of the apostasia and the revealing of the man of lawlessness are coincident" (F.F. Bruce, WBC, 167).

"Paul's explanation as to why they should not be deceived begins with a reminder about what must take place 'first,' namely, 'the rebellion,' which includes 'the revelation of the man of lawlessness' (Fee, NICNT).



2 Thess 2:7 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.

anomia = "to behave with complete disregard for the laws or regulations of a society" (Louw-Nida 88.138).





What Is The "Rebellion?"

2 Thess 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it is not present** unless **the apostasy** comes first

1. Religious defection (Acts 21:21)
2. Political "rebellion" against God "universal"

"It appears more probable from the context that a general abandonment of the basis of civil order is envisaged. This is not only rebellion against the law of Moses; it is a large-scale revolt against public order, and since public order is maintained by the 'governing authorities' who 'have been instituted by God,'...It is, in fact, the whole concept of divine authority over the world that is set at defiance in 'the rebellion' par excellence" (Bruce, WBC, 167).




What Is The "Rebellion?"

2 Thess 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it is not present** unless **the rebellion** comes first...

2 Thess 2:10 and with all deception of wickedness for **those who perish**, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

"But despite the usual meaning of this noun in Acts 21, it can hardly have that sense here...After all, nothing in the context indicates that believers will be deceived by the 'lawless one'" (Fee, NICNT).


"The term rendered 'rebellion' is sometimes used of political or military rebellions....it is not so much the forsaking of one's first love and drifting into apathy that is meant, as setting oneself actively in opposition to God" (Morris, *2 Thessalonians*, 218).



"The worldwide, anti-God movement will be so universal as to earn for itself a special designation: 'the apostasy'" (Thomas, Expositors Bible Commentary, 11:322).

God's Rule: The Tale of Two Cities

Genesis 4:15 So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.




Genesis 6:3 Then Yahweh said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (diyn = govern, or to judge- Gesenius)

"The withdrawn Spirit of 6:3 calls to mind the hovering Spirit of 1:2. Where it hovers there is order, and chaos is restrained. Where it is withdrawn, chaos flourishes unchecked" (Victor Hamilton, NICOT).

Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds a man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed...


Genesis 11:4 Come let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the earth. (Genesis 3:22)



God's Rule: The Tale of Two Cities


Jeremiah 51:53 "Though **Babylon should ascend to the heavens** and though she should fortify her loft stronghold, From Me destroyers will come to her," declares the LORD.

Psalms 2:1-4 Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? **The kings of the earth** take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed saying "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!" He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, "But as for Me, **I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.**"



God's Rule: The Tale of Two Cities

Jeremiah 51:6-8 Flee from the midst of Babylon, and each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, for this is the **LORD's time of vengeance**; He is going to render recompense to her. Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad. **Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken.**




God's Rule: The Tale of Two Cities

Isaiah 21:9 Now behold, here comes a troop of riders, horsemen in pairs. And one said, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon**"; And all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground."

Revelation 14:8 And another angel, a second one, followed saying, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations** drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.

Revelation 21:2 And I saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven **from God**, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.



The Rebellion Summary

1. The rebellion referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 does not refer to Israel's apostasy, but to a worldwide rebellion that God interrupted in Genesis 11.
2. The rebellion and the revelation of the man of lawlessness will occur only after the restrainer is taken out of the way.
3. It is very likely, therefore, that the rebellion and the man of lawlessness come on the scene at the same time.
