

2 Thessalonians 2:1–5

Confusion Concerning the Coming

Study 03 · 2 Thessalonians 2
Small Group Bible Study Series

Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers ThD (SellersBibleInstitute.com; used by permission)

Editor: The Gospel Vault

① TEXT	② DEVOTIONAL	③ COMMENTARY	④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE
Foundation	Personal preparation	Teacher / Leader preparation	Group meeting
<i>Everyone</i>	<i>All group members</i>	<i>Teacher / Leader</i>	<i>Small group</i>

⑤ Application closes each study and draws from all sections above, plus FGR.docx.

① THE BIBLICAL TEXT

2 Thessalonians 2:1–5 · New King James Version (NKJV)

1 *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,*

2 *not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

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,*

4 *who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

5 *Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

② DEVOTIONAL

Personal preparation · Drawn from the teaching and outline

“Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled.” — 2 Thessalonians 2:2

The Thessalonians were hurting, and hurting people are easy to frighten. A voice claiming the Spirit, a confident “word from the Lord,” and a letter that seemed to come from Paul all told them the same thing: the Day of the Lord has come, and you missed the Rapture.

Paul does not scold them first; he calls them brothers and pleads with them. Then he gives them truth to stand on. That Day cannot begin until the great falling away comes and the man of sin is revealed. The church that Christ will catch up is not appointed to that wrath.

His remedy is simple: “Do you not remember?” Truth that is heard, reviewed, and taught to others becomes an anchor when the winds of rumor blow.

For Reflection

1. What voices — on TV, online, or in conversation — tend to shake your mind or trouble your heart?
2. How often do you review what you have learned from God’s Word?
3. Who could you explain this week’s truth to before next week?

The One who promised to come for you has already told you the order of things — rest in what He said.

③ COMMENTARY

Teacher preparation resource · Full text organized under outline headings

PROPOSITION

The Thessalonians were shaken by a false spirit, a fabricated prophecy, and a forged letter claiming that the Day of the Lord had already come. Paul corrects them: that Day cannot begin until the great apostasy comes and the man of sin is revealed — and the antidote to every such deception is to remember, review, and teach what God has already said.

Outline: Confusion Concerning the Coming — 2 Thessalonians 2:1–5. Teacher's text is merged under the outline headings; "From the outline" lines carry outline notes, and shaded Study Notes are supplemental material drawn from the FGR resource library.

Opening Prayer and Reading of the Text

Before we look at the Word, let's ask God's blessing on it. "Lord, this is Your Word. These are Your people. I am Your undershepherd. Help me to do what I know to do, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will do His work among us, to drive the Word home to our lives, to all that we do, so that we will be totally Yours — and being totally Yours, totally at Your work — until You come or call for us. We ask it in our Savior's name. Amen."

I'd like to read the Scripture first. It's 2 Thessalonians 2:1–5, and it goes like this. And if you have it in your text with you — your Bible with you — then please follow along. It would be helpful. "Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 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, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?"

Confusion concerning the coming of the Lord.

Introduction: The Subject of Paul's Concern

A. The Rapture — 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18

The subject of Paul's concern in the previous book, in 1 Thessalonians — one of his subjects was "as to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him." He's talking about the Rapture. He had discussed that in the previous book. I think it's worth reviewing, so I will quote a short passage — 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. If you have your text open, back a couple of pages and you're there.

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

That's the Rapture of the church. That's the church being taken out — not everybody else, just the church. And in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye — gone.

B. The Day of the Lord — 1 Thessalonians 5:1–3

But he also taught about another day. And people get these mixed up. The other day is in chapter 5 of 1 Thessalonians. It's called the Day of the Lord. The Rapture, by the way, is called the Day of Christ very often, and I'll show you later. But this is the Day of the Lord. Then he says this: “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.”

C. Note: The Two Days Distinguished

1. The Day of the Lord: Judgment (7 Years) and Blessing (1,000 Years)

Now, note this: the Day of the Lord is a time of judgment — seven years — and a time of blessing — a thousand years. That's the Day of the Lord.

2. The Rapture Comes Before the Day of the Lord, But Does Not Start It

The Rapture, on the other hand, is the taking out of the church — taking out of the world every person who has believed on Jesus, who has eternal life. Everyone who has died in that state will be raised, and then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. That's the Rapture.

Now, the Rapture, then, comes before the Day of the Lord. But it does not start the Day of the Lord. That's a lot of confusion in many minds — thinking that the Rapture, the day after the Rapture, starts the Tribulation. Not true. The Rapture is to the church, and the church is not a part of the Old Testament at all. Not mentioned in the Old Testament. It's not of the Old Testament at all. The Rapture does not start the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord starts later, as we'll see. I'll tell you how. All right.

I. The Confusion by Apostates — 2:1–2

So Paul talks about the confusion of the apostates.

A. The Plea by the Apostle — 2:1–2a

1. “Brethren”

And the plea by the apostle goes like this. He begins the plea with the word “brothers.” It shows his great feeling for them. It’s not, “Hey, you people, listen up.” No. He’s saying, “Brothers, I want you to know this. We’re brothers. We’re from the same womb. We have the same Father, the same older Brother, Jesus Christ. We are brothers.” So he said, “I’m concerned about you.”

2. “We Ask You” — We Beseech You

“We ask you” — and that word “ask” means more than just “I’m asking you.” No, it’s “I beseech you. Please, I’m pleading with you.” That’s the idea.

From the outline: The word “ask,” *Erōtōmen* (ἑρωτῶμεν), is stronger than simply “ask” — “beg” or “beseech.”

3. Not Shaken in Mind, Not Troubled in Emotion

He said, “we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled.” Now, the “shaken” is like to be tossed around, back and forth, in your mind. Don’t be shaken by that. As one well-known singer said, “Don’t be all shook up.”

Oh — don’t be troubled either. Don’t be troubled — the word is the word from which we get our word thrombosis. That’s a blood clot somewhere in your body. That could be disturbing. Don’t be troubled like that. Don’t be frightened in your emotions. The first part was in your mind; then in your emotions. Don’t let that get to you. That’s the plea by the apostle.

B. The Plot by the Adversary — 2:2b

1. Why the Deception Convinced — 2:2b

Now, the plot by the adversary. He tells them why the deception convinced people.

a. A False Spirit — “either by spirit”

First, there was a false spirit. In 2b: don’t be troubled by a spirit — by a spirit, someone has given a false message in tongues. And even when tongues was a valid gift, prior to the completion of the New Testament — and due to the fact that there are humans involved — there, somewhere, there would be some fake messages. Just human people; they do that.

That’s why John warned people. He warned his readers to test the spirits. He says in chapter 4 of 1 John, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit.” Don’t believe everybody who stands up and says, “Hey, the Holy Spirit says.” No, I don’t believe that. “Test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” So there was a false spirit.

b. A Fabricated Prophecy — “or by word”

There was also a fabricated prophecy, by word. Somebody had a word from the Lord. Paul preferred the word of prophecy — the gift of prophecy over the gift of tongues. You know that? He said — oh, yeah — by a ratio of two thousand to one. He says, “in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” — 1 Corinthians 14:19.

Even so, this prophecy was in error. This prophecy was in error. So errors can occur in any of the gifts. Even preaching, you know — it can happen. If a person doesn't allow the Holy Spirit to work through him, then there can be error there as well. But this prophecy had error as well. It was saying, “Hey, we're in the Day of the Lord, and the Day of Christ has already passed. You missed the Rapture.”

c. The Enemy Behind the Deception

So there's an enemy behind all this activity. And that activity is causing all kinds of problems in that Thessalonian church. And that enemy, of course, is the devil — Satan, the enemy of our souls, the great deceiver. And that's what he wants to do. He wants to get in — and not just with these things, but he wants to get into every little aspect of our lives. And he wants this one against that one, and that one against this one, until we're not doing what we should be doing. We're not listening to what the Word of God tells us to do. And by not knowing the Word, we can do the wrong thing. And doing the wrong thing — then we can believe the wrong thing. “Oh, somebody says this is happening.” “Oh, really? I didn't know that.”

You ever hear some of the prophecy things that are on TV, or in books? Oh, yeah, there are a lot of things. And what they're doing is they're saying very much like what was happening here. They want to bring something current and say, “Oh, look, that's in the Bible. You didn't know that? Let me show you.” And so today they'll take things that are happening around there and say, “Now, that is Ezekiel 22.” No, no, no. Not true. And they get all kinds of things. And I hear them. In fact, I sit and watch them. I want to hear what they're saying. And what they're saying is not what the Word of God is saying. But that gets a lot of attention.

The other day — the newspaper in one hand, the Bible in the other. “Look what we're doing. That's exciting.” Well — sorry, not right. And that's what was happening there. Somebody's saying, “We're in the Tribulation.” “How do you know?” “Well, look, we're tribulating. There are a lot of people here — you all know what's happening, and things are getting terrible. And Paul said things would get terrible in the Day of the Lord. We must be in the Day of the Lord.” That's what's happening. And it was in error. But the great deceiver is behind all of this. And he's behind all that's going to happen in the Tribulation period.

d. A Forged Letter — “or by letter, as if from us”

There was a fabrication — there was spirit, and by word. Also, there was a forged letter — 2c: “or by letter, as if from us.” Someone had written a letter and apparently had attributed it to Paul. Now, I don't suppose he signed it, for some reason. But

Paul always signed his letters. Did you know that? He signed every book he wrote. Now, we don't have the handwriting of Paul. But he says that he always signed his letters at the end. In fact, he says it at the end of this letter. Wonder why.

He says, "The salutation of Paul with my own hand" — 3:17 — "which is a sign in every epistle; so I write." In other words, "That's the way I write. I always sign my work. I've signed it. If you don't have my signature on it" — he's talking about the autograph, of course — "if you don't have my signature, then it's not my epistle. So don't accept any letter that comes without my signature on it." So that was a deception.

2. What the Deception Contended — 2:2c

Now, what the deception contended is that the Day of the Lord has come. No. Some versions — you look at your Bible, you may say, "Oh, mine says the Day of Christ." Well, it doesn't matter. It doesn't change anything. The "Day of Christ" or the "Day of the Lord" is in the older manuscripts. That's why so many people hang on to that.

But if it said "Day of Christ," what's the Day of Christ? The Rapture. And they thought that the Day of Christ — the Rapture — had already passed. Well, if they think they're in the Tribulation, then of course it's passed. So either of them would not harm anything that's said here. The Day of Christ, or the day of the Rapture, has passed, and "we are now in the Day of the Lord. We're now in the Tribulation period, because we are having a lot of troubles."

They really didn't grasp the magnitude of the Tribulation period. They didn't have the book of Revelation to read. And so they didn't know then just how disastrous that period is. So they thought they were there, because of their many troubles. See — and if they think they're in the Day of the Lord, the Day of Christ has passed. All right, so that's the confusion. It was caused by these apostates.

Study Note — "The Day of Christ" or "The Day of the Lord"?

The teacher's point that the wording "doesn't change anything" rests on a real difference among Greek manuscripts. The Majority Text and the Textus Receptus behind the KJV and NKJV read *hēmera tou Christou*, "the day of Christ"; the critical text (NA28) behind the NASB, ESV, and NIV reads *hēmera tou kyriou*, "the day of the Lord." Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad's *Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* follows the first reading.

Either way, the false teaching was the same: the deceivers claimed that the end-time period of judgment had already arrived — which, for believers taught that the church would be caught up first (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:16–18; 5:9), meant that they had somehow been left behind. The perfect tense of *enistēmi* ("had come") means "is already present," not merely "is near." Paul answers that claim in verses 3–5.

Sources (FGR): Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982); Constable, *Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians*; Walvoord and Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*.

II. The Correction by the Apostle — 2:3–5

Then there is the correction by Paul. Paul corrects it: “No, that is not true. Here’s what is true. Let no one deceive you by any means.” No.

A. The Error of the Deception — 2:3–4

The error of the deception is shown in verses 3 and 4. He says that Day can’t come — that is, the Day of the Lord can’t begin until there comes a falling away first.

1. The Apostasy — 2:3a

a. Apostasia: “Departure” and the Rapture View

“Falling away.” The word “falling away” is the Greek word *apostasia*. Wonder what that means? It’s the apostasy, of course. The departure is really, literally, what it says — the departure. And that has led some people to say, “Oh, the departure — that means that the Day of the Lord can’t begin until the Rapture, the departure of the church.”

Well, I like that. But there’s one — a person who has read *Rethinking the Tribulation* by E. Schuyler English. He taught that. And I taught it for a while. I thought that was really great. Then there are some things I don’t like about it, and I think that that’s not true. But rather, in this case they’re thinking that the Rapture had occurred and they missed it. That’s terrible.

b. A Special Falling Away: The Church Departs from the Truth

So the text says “the falling away” — the falling away. It’s a special falling away. It’s not just the departure of some people or churches, but the church is going to depart from the truth of the Word of God. Instead of standing for the Word, the church is going to cave in to what’s going on around them.

Why would they do that? Well, one reason would be if the people think that’s what the church is all about — “then we’ll let them think that. As long as they come to church, we don’t care.” Did somebody do that? Would some church do that? I think some church would do that. I know one that did. I’m going to tell you the name of it: the Laodicean church. You thought I was going to say that church? No, we’re not that. The Laodicean church, Revelation chapter 3. They had departed from the Word altogether. They were an apostate church. That’s the seventh church in Revelation 2 and 3.

c. Walvoord: A Pervasive, Global Departure

Dr. Walvoord puts it this way: “At the time 2 Thessalonians was written, there was no doubt some error in the church, but there was no widespread apostasy in the ordinary sense of the term. The churches were still true to the Lord. Paul was declaring that the Day of the Lord cannot come until first a pervasive, global departure from the faith.”

And this — that’s mentioned in a lot of places: 1 Timothy chapter 4; 2 Timothy chapter 3 and 4; James chapter 5; 2 Peter chapter 2; Jude 3, and then also in Jude.

So you read the rest of your Bible there. That'd be good. You'll get it. If you want those places, I'll let you know. I have them.

d. The Raptured Church and the Leftover Church

That's the apostasy. That has to come first. Before the Day of the Lord can begin, there has to be the apostasy. The church has to be bad church. Now, that tells me that is not going to be before the Rapture. I think the raptured church will be a true church, pictured by the church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3. And that Laodicean church is the leftover — quote — “church” that's in the Tribulation period. So that's the apostasy.

Study Note — Two Pretribulational Readings of “the Falling Away”

Both readings the teacher mentions are held within the pretribulational, dispensational tradition. E. Schuyler English (editor of the New Scofield Reference Bible) argued in *Re-Thinking the Rapture* (1954) that *apostasias* should be taken in its basic sense of “departure” and that “the departure” refers to the Rapture itself; some later DTS-trained writers have defended the same view. The majority of dispensational scholars, including Walvoord, Ryrie, and Pentecost, take *apostasias* in its usual New Testament sense of religious revolt (its only other NT use, Acts 21:21, speaks of forsaking Moses) — a final, worldwide departure from the faith that prepares the way for the man of sin.

Either view keeps the church out of the Day of the Lord, and both agree with Paul's main point: the Thessalonians could not be in that Day, because what must come first had not yet come.

Sources (FGR): J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958); John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983); John F. Hart, ed., Evidence for the Rapture (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015).

2. The Antichrist — 2:3b–4

a. His Revelation — “and the man of sin is revealed”

Now the Antichrist — his revelation. He has to be revealed. So, two things: there has to come the apostasy first, and then comes the revelation of the man of sin. He'll be revealed. How will we know him? Well, he'll be revealed at the beginning of the Tribulation, because he's going to make a covenant with Israel for one week. It says that in Daniel 9, verse 27. Here it is: “He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will bring an end to the sacrifice and the offering.” So this is the event that marks the beginning of the Tribulation period.

The church — oh, yeah. Then the church is going to be raptured. The church goes up to be with the Lord. Then comes the man of sin — he's going to make a covenant with Israel: “We'll protect you.” Do you think Israel would like to have that? They're trying to work something out now. And I saw the other day somebody said, “Oh, this is it.” In fact, he said, “We'll be in more than four years, and we'll be in the Tribulation.” Yeah — I don't think he was pre-trib. I don't think he knew what it was. But — I said, “Oh, but they're working on it.”

That shows that somewhere along the line there's going to be a covenant with Israel. Israel's going to say, “Oh, yeah, I'll have a covenant with you.” And this man, this

man of sin, is going to say, "We will protect you. If they touch you, they touch me. And we'll get them." And that's what starts the Tribulation period — seven years. And after that seven years — don't fall into a pit here — after that seven years, then comes the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth.

So what he's saying is, "You're not in this Tribulation period yet." But that man of sin has to be revealed. The apostasy — the falling away of the church, the church not believing anything — and the man of sin has to be revealed. And he'll be revealed — you'll know who he is — when he signs that peace treaty with Israel. That begins the Tribulation period.

b. His Description

Who is this guy? Well, his description is given.

1) *By alias* — "*the son of perdition*." He's described by his alias: the son of perdition. And there are other names. I didn't realize how many names there were. Here they are. On the back of your notes you'll see the names of the man of sin. Son of perdition. He's the little horn of Daniel 7. He's the king of fierce countenance, chapter 8 of Daniel. Then the prince who is to come — Daniel 9. The one who makes desolate — Daniel 9. The willful king, Daniel 11. The foolish shepherd, Zechariah 11. The son of destruction — 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Oh, that sounds familiar. And then the lawless one, the wicked one — 2 Thessalonians 2:8; next week. The rider of the white horse, Revelation 6. The beast out of the sea, Revelation 13. There are a lot of names for him, and he gets a lot of press in the Old Testament. He's coming — but not until we get out of here. So you know him, then, by his aliases.

2) *By agenda*. Also by his agenda.

a) *He will oppose God*. He will oppose God. Now, this is a reference to the true God, Jehovah — "opposes God," capital G.

b) *He will exalt himself above God*. And then he will exalt himself above God. Not only is he going to oppose God — push against God, against whatever God is doing — he's also going to exalt himself above: "I am above God." Who's that, do you think? Oh no — Ezekiel. "I will put myself above the heavens." That's Ezekiel 28. He does that. That's him. The power behind the Antichrist is the devil himself. And he's saying the Antichrist, this son of perdition, is going to be doing that. He's going to oppose God; he's going to exalt himself above God — who claims the right to receive the worship that the Bible says belongs to Jehovah only.

c) *He will exalt himself above gods*. And then he will exalt himself above gods — small g. Gods, plural, cannot be the true God. He will allow no other religions. See, it's not just that he hates Christianity. That's what we're seeing today — that you can say anything you want about the other religions and their leaders and all of that, but you try to say one thing about Jesus Christ — "Oh, no, we can't do that. So it's happening; it's beginning. We need to see that, because we don't want to put ourselves in the place of the Thessalonians and say, "Oh, well, we're in trouble. We must be in the Tribulation." No, not yet. Find out what the Bible says. He'll exalt

himself above all religions, and they'll worship him, or there will be a penalty of death.

d) *He will sit as God in the temple of God.* He'll sit as God in the temple.

e) *He will show himself as God.* And he will show himself that he is God: "I'm God," and he is the supreme God of the universe, of the whole world.

c. Revealed Now, Doing These Things Later

What I want you to see: all of these things he's saying about him, all these things he's going to do — it doesn't mean that he's going to do them before the Day of the Lord. That doesn't make any sense. What he's saying is, he is the man of sin, and he is going to be revealed. All these other things are simply to distinguish him. They are a description of him. When you get down to "he's sitting in the temple of God" — that's halfway through the Tribulation. He's not talking about that. He's talking about this: this is the one who's going to do that in the future. He's the one who's going to be revealed. That one's going to be revealed, and all these things he's going to do later. All right?

So I just wanted you to see that the word "who" there tells you he is the one who is going to do these things — not "the one who you will see has done all these things; then you'll know you're in the Day of the Lord." Not true. He'll show himself as God. No.

d. A Picture in History: Antiochus Epiphanes

Interesting: in 167 B.C. there was a Syrian ruler. His name was Antiochus, and he was called Epiphanes — the bright one, the shining one. So Antiochus Epiphanes captured Jerusalem. And he offered a pig on the altar. And then he placed a statue of Zeus in the temple. That's history — 200 years before. He put that statue of Zeus there, but guess what? The statue of Zeus looked like him. Somebody had made it a statue of Zeus and put his face on it. And it looked like God. Wonder why.

And so I think this is a God-ordained picture of what the Antichrist is going to do. Antiochus Epiphanes, 167 — B.C., excuse me. Google it. You Google it, you know, all kinds of things about that. And it doesn't hurt to think about the sermon sometime in the future. No. That's the error of the deception. That's what was wrong.

Study Note — Antiochus IV Epiphanes and "the Abomination of Desolation"

Daniel foretold a ruler who would "take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation" (Daniel 11:31). That prophecy found a first fulfillment in Antiochus IV, the Seleucid king who in 167 B.C. outlawed Jewish worship, set up an altar to Olympian Zeus in the temple, and defiled the altar with unclean sacrifices. Yet Jesus, speaking two centuries later, still spoke of "the abomination of desolation" as future (Matthew 24:15), and Daniel 9:27 places it in the middle of the seventieth week. Dispensational interpreters therefore see Antiochus as a historical preview — exactly as the teacher says, "a God-ordained picture" — of the man of sin who will sit in the temple of God and display himself as God (2:4).

Sources (FGR): Pentecost, *Things to Come*; Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, rev. ed. (Tustin,

B. The Antidote for the Deception — 2:5

1. “Do You Not Remember?”

Then the antidote for the deception — this is it; I’m almost there — verse 5: “Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?” Is there a little bit of sarcasm here? “You people believe that? What was I doing when I taught you?”

When Paul went to Thessalonica, there was not one believer there. So he preached the gospel to them, and they believed. And then, for at most three or four months — at most — he taught them, and he taught them prophecy. Anybody who thinks, “Well, you shouldn’t be teaching prophecy; that’s so hard to understand” — preach it; it’s in the Word. And he taught them that right away. And they forgot it. They forgot the most important part: the church will not go through the Tribulation. If they had caught that, there wouldn’t have been any problem here.

2. Hear It, Review It, Teach It

So what am I saying? I’m saying this: it is not enough to come and sit over there and sit over here for an hour each, then go out of here and forget what you ever heard and don’t think about it anymore till you come back next week — “Oh, where were we? I wonder what we’re doing.” We have to think about that. Pay attention to it, first of all. You have to hear it first. Pay attention to what you hear. It’s important. Review it often. Teach others. Yeah — teach other people. The best way to learn is to teach it.

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson came down to West Palm, and the school — Miami Christian College — no, Miami Bible College. I went up there to meet him, and they said, “Hey, a man has been recommended to us to teach Greek. What do you think?” “Oh, yeah, yeah, he can do that.” It was me. He came back, and I said, “Dr. Johnson, you think I can teach Greek? I only had about 50 hours of it.” And he said — he’s from Alabama — “Norm, I’ll tell you: you’ll know Greek when you teach it.”

This is it. You will know it when you teach it — when you tell somebody else, explain to somebody else, explain to your family. Talk about it to your husband or wife.

Teach others. And then you won’t forget it, and you won’t fall into the dilemma of the Thessalonians.

3. You Are Not Going into That Tribulation

The Lord is telling us here and now: you are not going into that Tribulation period. That is the Day of the Lord. That’s for the world. The Day of Christ is for the believers. The Day of the Lord is for the world — the Christ-rejecting world. And if we pay attention to that — and everything that He says, everything in this book,

everything we teach here and over here — it's all important. And we have to get it into our heads, and then get it into our lives, and then get it into the lives of other people. That's it. That's what it's for.

Conclusion: Other Names for the “Son of Perdition,” the Final World Dictator

- The Little Horn (Daniel 7:8)
- A King of Fierce Countenance (Daniel 8:23)
- The Prince Who Is to Come (Daniel 9:26)
- The One Who Makes Desolate (Daniel 9:27)
- The Willful King (Daniel 11:36–45)
- A Foolish Shepherd (Zechariah 11:15–17)
- The Son of Destruction (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- The Lawless (Wicked) One (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- The Rider on the White Horse (Revelation 6:2)
- The Beast out of the Sea (Revelation 13:1–2)

“Lord, thank You. You brought us to this point. You’ve given us a tremendous amount of information. But it’s in Your Word. It can be rehearsed. It can be learned, reviewed. It can be shared. Help us to do that — to our good, to the good of those to whom we share it, and, more than that, for the good of the work of Jesus Christ that has been committed to us. Show us how to do it. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE

For use during the group meeting · Focused on the commentary text

Greek Word Study — 2 Thessalonians 2:1–5

Grammar and parsing: Blue Letter Bible. Definitions cite only the sources that add clarity (STR · THAY · VINE), with significance in context for every word.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.1	παρουσία <i>coming</i>	G3952 <i>parousia</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	STR: a being near, advent. THAY: the presence or arrival of a dignitary. Significance: here joined to “our gathering together to Him” — the coming of Christ for His church, the Rapture.
v.1	ἐπισυναγωγή <i>gathering together</i>	G1997 <i>episynagōgē</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	STR: a complete collection; an assembling. Used elsewhere only in Hebrews 10:25. Significance: the gathering of believers to Christ described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
v.1	ἐρωτάω <i>we ask</i>	G2065 <i>erōtaō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Ind. 1st Pl.	THAY: to request, entreat, beseech. Significance: not a casual request but a pleading — “I beseech you, please.”
v.2	σαλεύω <i>shaken</i>	G4531 <i>saleuō</i> Verb — Aor. Pass. Inf.	VINE: of the motion produced by winds, storms, waves (cf. Acts 4:31). Significance: minds tossed back and forth — “don’t be all shook up.”
v.2	θροέω <i>troubled</i>	G2360 <i>throeō</i> Verb — Pres. Pass. Inf.	THAY: to cry aloud; passive, to be alarmed, frightened. The same word Jesus used: “See that you are not troubled” (Matthew 24:6). Significance: the shaking of the mind becomes fear in the emotions.
v.2	ἐπιστολή <i>letter</i>	G1992 <i>epistolē</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	STR: a written message. Significance: a forged letter “as if from us” — which is why Paul closes with his own signature as the sign of genuineness (3:17).
v.2	ἐνίστημι <i>had come</i>	G1764 <i>enistēmi</i> Verb — Perf. Act. Ind. 3rd Sg.	THAY: to be upon, be present (cf. “things present,” Romans 8:38; “present distress,” 1 Corinthians 7:26). Significance: the false claim was not that the Day was near, but that it was already here.
v.3	ἐξαπατάω <i>deceive</i>	G1818 <i>exapataō</i> Verb — Aor. Act. Subj. 3rd Sg.	STR: to seduce wholly, beguile thoroughly. Significance: Satan, the great deceiver, behind the spirit, word, and letter.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.3	ἀποστασία <i>falling away</i>	G646 <i>apostasia</i> Noun — Nom. Fem. Sg.	STR: defection from truth, apostasy. Elsewhere in the NT only Acts 21:21 (“forsake Moses”). Significance: a pervasive, global departure from the faith — though some pretribulationists take it as “departure,” the Rapture.
v.3	ἀποκαλύπτω <i>revealed</i>	G601 <i>apokalyptō</i> Verb — Aor. Pass. Subj. 3rd Sg.	STR: to take off the cover, disclose. Significance: the man of sin is revealed when he makes the covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27) — the start of the Tribulation.
v.3	ἁμαρτία <i>(man of) sin</i>	G266 <i>hamartia</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	STR: missing the mark, sin. (The critical text reads <i>anomias</i> , “lawlessness,” as in 2:8.) Significance: a man characterized by sin itself.
v.3	ἀπώλεια <i>perdition</i>	G684 <i>apōleia</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	VINE: ruin, loss — not extinction but loss of well-being. The same phrase “son of perdition” is used of Judas (John 17:12). Significance: his alias marks him as one destined for ruin.
v.4	ὑπεραίρομαι <i>exalts himself</i>	G5229 <i>hyperairomai</i> Verb — Pres. Mid. Ptc. Nom. Masc. Sg.	THAY: to lift oneself up above, be exalted beyond measure. Significance: he places himself above God and above all gods, claiming worship that belongs to Jehovah only.
v.4	ναός <i>temple</i>	G3485 <i>naos</i> Noun — Acc. Masc. Sg.	VINE: the inner sanctuary, distinguished from <i>hieron</i> , the whole temple area. Significance: he sits in the very holy place — at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15).

Grammar Abbreviation Key

Cases: Nom. · Gen. · Dat. · Acc. · Voc. | Number: Sg. · Pl. | Gender: Masc. · Fem. · Neut.

Verb Mood: Ind. · Imp. · Subj. · Opt. · Inf. · Ptc. | Tense: Pres. · Imperf. · Fut. · Aor. · Perf. · Plpf. | Voice: Act. · Mid. · Pass. | Person: 1st/2nd/3rd Sg./Pl.

Hebrew Word Study: not included this week. Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah are cited for their content in translation; no Hebrew term is a developed point of the message.

Study Questions

Part 1 — From the Commentary

Outline Point	Key Truth
Introduction	Paul had taught two different events: the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18) and the Day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:1–3). The Rapture comes before the Day of the Lord but does not start it.

Outline Point	Key Truth
I.A The plea — 2:1–2a	“Brothers ... we beseech you”: don’t be shaken in mind or troubled in your emotions.
I.B.1 Why the deception convinced — 2:2b	A false spirit (test the spirits, 1 John 4:1), a fabricated prophecy (errors can occur in any gift), and a forged letter (Paul signed every letter, 3:17) — with Satan, the great deceiver, behind them.
I.B.2 What it contended — 2:2c	That the Day of the Lord had come and the Day of Christ (the Rapture) had passed; their troubles made them think they were in the Tribulation.
II.A.1 The apostasy — 2:3a	The Day of the Lord cannot begin until a pervasive, global departure from the faith — pictured by Laodicea; the raptured church is pictured by Philadelphia.
II.A.2 The Antichrist — 2:3b–4	Revealed when he makes the seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27). Known by his aliases and his agenda; the description says who he is, not that he must do it all before the Day begins.
II.B The antidote — 2:5	“Do you not remember?” Hear it, review it, teach it — “You’ll know Greek when you teach it.”

Part 2 — Study Questions

1. What is the difference between the Rapture and the Day of the Lord, according to the teacher?

Leader answer: The Rapture is the taking out of the church — every believer, the dead raised and the living caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18). The Day of the Lord is a time of judgment (seven years) and blessing (a thousand years). The Rapture comes before the Day of the Lord, but it does not start it; the Day of the Lord starts later, when the man of sin is revealed.

2. What three channels did the deception come through, and how should believers guard against each?

Leader answer: A false spirit (a false message in tongues) — test the spirits (1 John 4:1). A fabricated prophecy, “by word” — errors can occur in any gift, even preaching. A forged letter “as if from us” — Paul signed every epistle (3:17), so a letter without his signature was not his. Behind all three was Satan, the great deceiver.

3. Why does it make little difference whether verse 2 reads “the day of Christ” or “the day of the Lord”?

Leader answer: If it is “the day of the Lord,” the false teachers claimed the Tribulation had begun. If it is “the day of Christ” — the Rapture — they claimed it had already passed. Either way the message was the same: you missed the Rapture and are now in the Tribulation.

4. What two things must happen before the Day of the Lord can begin, and how will the man of sin be revealed?

Leader answer: The falling away (apostasia) — a pervasive, global departure of the church from the truth, pictured by Laodicea — and the revelation of the man of sin. He will be revealed when he makes a seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27): “We will protect you.” That event starts the Tribulation.

5. What is Paul’s antidote to deception in verse 5, and what does the teacher urge us to do with what we hear?

Leader answer: “Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?” Paul had taught them prophecy in a few months, but they forgot the most important part — the church will not go through the Tribulation. We must pay attention to what we hear, review it often, and teach others, because “you’ll know it when you teach it.”

Part 3 — Passage Summary

Verse	Phrase	Summary
2:1	“concerning the coming ... and our gathering together to Him”	The subject is the Rapture, taught in 1 Thessalonians 4.
2:2a	“not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled”	Paul pleads with his brothers not to be tossed in mind or frightened in heart.
2:2b	“by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us”	False spirit, fabricated prophecy, forged letter — with Satan behind them.
2:2c	“as though the day of Christ had come”	The false claim: the Day is already present and the Rapture has passed.
2:3a	“unless the falling away comes first”	A global apostasy must come first.
2:3b	“and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition”	The Antichrist must be revealed — at his covenant with Israel.
2:4	“who opposes and exalts himself ... sits as God”	His agenda: opposing God and claiming worship in the temple.
2:5	“Do you not remember ... I told you these things?”	The antidote: remember, review, and teach the Word.

⑤ APPLICATION

Closes the study · personal & corporate

1. Test What You Hear

1 John 4:1 — “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God.”

Source: ③ Commentary, I.B.1.a–c.

The Thessalonians were shaken because they believed a spirit, a word, and a letter without testing them against what Paul had taught. Today the same thing happens with prophecy programs, books, and “newspaper in one hand” teaching. The Word of God is the test: if what you hear is not what the Word is saying, it may get attention, but it is not right.

Reflection: *What recent teaching or news has unsettled you, and have you tested it against Scripture?*

Practical Step: This week, take one prophecy claim you have heard and look up the passages yourself before accepting it.

2. Not Appointed to Wrath

2 Thessalonians 2:3 — “that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed.”

Source: ③ Commentary, Introduction C and II.A; Study Note “Two Pretribulational Readings”; FGR — Pentecost, Things to Come.

Hard times do not mean the believer has missed the Rapture. The church that has eternal life by faith in Christ will be caught up to meet Him before the Day of the Lord begins. That assurance does not rest on how well we are doing, but on God’s promise. Troubles are real, but they are not the Tribulation — and they are no evidence that God has left us behind.

Reflection: *When troubles pile up, what do you tend to conclude about God’s plan for you?*

Practical Step: Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 aloud this week and write down every promise to the believer you find.

3. Teach It to Keep It

2 Thessalonians 2:5 — “Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.B.

The Thessalonians forgot the most important part of what they had been taught. The teacher’s mentor told him, “You’ll know Greek when you teach it.” The same is true of every truth in Scripture. Hearing is the start; reviewing keeps it; teaching it to others plants it in our lives and theirs.

Reflection: *What truth from this study would you have trouble explaining to someone else?*

Practical Step: Explain the difference between the Rapture and the Day of the Lord to a family member or friend this week.

4. Stand When the Church Caves

2 Thessalonians 2:3 — “the falling away.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.A.1.b–d.

The great apostasy will come when the church caves in to what is going on around it — “as long as they come to church, we don’t care.” Laodicea is the warning; Philadelphia is the pattern. A church and a believer who stand for the Word, even when it is unpopular to say one thing about Jesus Christ, are living like the church that will be caught up to meet Him.

Reflection: *Where are you tempted to soften the truth to keep the peace?*

Practical Step: Read Revelation 3:7–22 and list the differences between Philadelphia and Laodicea; pray through the list.

End of Study · 2 Thessalonians 2:1–5