

2 Thessalonians 2:6–12

The Removal of the Restrainer

Study 04 · 2 Thessalonians 2
Small Group Bible Study Series

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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 2:6–12 · New King James Version (NKJV)

6 *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.*

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.*

8 *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

9 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,*

10 *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

11 *And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,*

12 *that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

② DEVOTIONAL

Personal preparation · Drawn from the teaching and outline

“Only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.” — 2 Thessalonians 2:7

Evil is already at work in the world — the mystery of lawlessness is not a future idea but a present reality. Yet it has not run wild. Someone is holding it back: the Holy Spirit, who has lived in every believer since Pentecost and will never leave us.

That means your presence in this world matters. The gates of hell cannot prevail against a church indwelt by God Himself. And when the church is caught up, the Restrainer's work through us will end; then the lawless one will rise with signs and lying wonders — and be destroyed by the mere breath of the Lord's mouth.

Those who perish do so because they would not receive the love of the truth. The simplicity of the cross is still God's offer. He is in control. He wins — and we win with Him.

For Reflection

1. How does knowing the Holy Spirit indwells you forever change the way you face evil?
2. Where are you tempted to be impressed by “signs and wonders” more than by the truth?
3. Who do you know who needs to hear the simplicity of the gospel before it is too late?

I looked at the last page: He wins — and we are winning with Him.

③ COMMENTARY

Teacher preparation resource · Full text organized under outline headings

PROPOSITION

The Thessalonians could not be in the Day of the Lord, because three things must come first: the great apostasy, the revelation of the man of sin, and the removal of the Restrainer — the Holy Spirit indwelling the church. Once He is taken out of the way, the lawless one will be revealed, empowered by Satan, deceiving the perishing with false miracles — but the Lord Jesus will destroy him at His coming, and God remains in control from beginning to end.

Outline: The Removal of the Restrainer — 2 Thessalonians 2:6–12. 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.

Introduction: Three Reasons the Thessalonians Were Not in the Day of the Lord

The last time — which was two weeks ago — Paul gave us two reasons why the Thessalonians could not be in the Day of the Lord. Remember, they said they thought they were in the Day of the Lord, and he gave them two reasons why they were not.

You'll remember that the Day of the Lord is a period of time that starts with judgment — seven years of judgment. You see the Rapture and the Tribulation, that line there. The Tribulation doesn't start at the Rapture necessarily, but it will start. And when it starts, there will be seven years of Tribulation, and there will be a thousand years of the millennial reign of Christ. And that is the Day of the Lord.

From the outline: The Day of the Lord is a period of time that has judgment (7 years — the Tribulation) and blessing (1,000 years — the Millennium) on this earth. The "Day of the Lord" starts with "the Tribulation."

A. "Do You Not Remember?" — 2:5

Let me say one more thing — verse 5. Now, the reason I included verse 5 here is because Paul told the Thessalonians, "You should remember this." I'm going to do the same thing. I'm reading it as what Paul said, but I'm saying it to you: "Do you not remember that when I was with you two weeks ago, I told you these things?" I think it's really interesting to me that Paul said he expected them to remember what he taught them. And why not?

B. Reason One: There Must Be a Falling Away — The Great Apostasy

And so these people had not — Paul says, "You're not in the Day of the Lord, because there must come a falling away first." That's the great apostasy. We talked about that. I didn't say to you, though, last week, that there was one line of thinking

that this departure — which is what it is — could be the Rapture of the church. I lean toward it, but I have some reasons not to believe it, and so I didn't present that. But there is that. But the departure — we're going to see today that there's a departure of the church that is going to be before that as well. But he's talking about the falling away from the faith.

And this is not just a few people denying the Lord, not just a few people going away from the truth of the gospel. It is a whole, full-scale going away. And that part is a little hard to see: how can that be? If the church is going to be raptured, and this is going to happen before the church is raptured, then how come there will be a falling away before the Rapture?

And I think maybe it could be that the church will be raptured, and there will be a falling away from the faith — the church itself. And there will be a church — not the body of Christ, but there will be a semblance of church there. Perhaps people who see the Rapture — the church leaving; they won't see them leaving, but see that they are gone. That may be the group that gets together, but they soon are dissipated. They leave the truth of the gospel, and that's the falling away. I don't see it as the church — the raptured church — having fallen away. I don't see that at all. So there's been a falling away, he said.

From the outline: This is not just the apostasy of a few people or in one particular place. There was apostasy going on as Paul wrote this epistle. There was even more apostasy when John wrote his epistles. This apostasy will be worldwide and church-wide.

C. Reason Two: The Man of Sin Must Be Revealed

Then he also said that the man of sin — lawlessness — must be revealed. This man, revealed as this man — he will make a covenant with Israel for a seven-year period. Now, that's the key. The thing that starts the Day of the Lord will be the man of sin, the lawless one, making a covenant with Israel for a seven-year period. And you see that in Daniel, Daniel chapter 9, verse 27. Read verses 24 through 27 to get the context. You really ought to read that to see what he's doing there.

Anyway, that's the man of sin — the world ruler, the Antichrist, whatever we want to call him. He gets a lot of names. He is going to make a covenant of peace with Israel for one seven-year period. And the people who are biblically aware at that time — and there will be some — will recognize that this is the Antichrist. And that is the event that begins — starts — the prophecy clock for Israel ticking again.

From the outline: The man of lawlessness will be on the earth before he is revealed as this man.

D. Reason Three: The Restrainer Must Be Removed

But then there's a third thing that has to happen before the man of sin — before the Tribulation begins. So we start now in verse 6.

I. The Present Conflict — 2:6–7

So he comes now to the present conflict, verses 6 and 7. And the title of the message is “The Removal of the Restrainer.” There has to be a removal of the restrainer.

A. The Revelation of the Restrainer — 2:6

1. A “What” — The Restrainer as a Force

Now, the revelation of the restrainer. And I’m going to take this restrainer to be the Holy Spirit — the Holy Spirit indwelling the church. That is the restrainer. And as I go along, I’ll give you reasons why I believe that.

All right, so the revelation of the restrainer, in verse 6: “And now you know what is restraining.” Now, it’s a what. What is restraining? It’s a neuter. Well, that doesn’t sound like the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s a person. Well, we’ll see in a minute. But the restrainer is restraining now, until — “that he may be revealed in his own time” — that he, that is the Antichrist, will be revealed in his own time. So something is holding back the evil, so that when the time comes, the Antichrist, the man of sin, will be allowed to do his thing. But not until.

The “and” that begins this verse connects that with the previous verse. So he’s still talking about the same thing: you can’t be in the Day of the Lord yet, because this has to happen. Now, this we’re talking about now is, the restrainer has to be removed. So the restrainer is a force. The restrainer is a thing. You know what restrains until he’s taken out of the way.

2. Only God Has the Power to Hold Back Satan

So Paul may have told them, I think — while he was teaching, he may have told them, “This is who the restrainer is” — but he doesn’t mention it here. So it’s a force. But we know that the restrainer has to have the power to hold back evil. And the one behind the evil is Satan. So whoever this is has to be powerful enough to hold back the forces of Satan. Now, who in the world would that be? Can only be God. So I think that’s where we’re headed with that. The restrainer has to have the power to hold back the evil from the church until the proper time. He’ll do that.

Matthew 16 — remember when Jesus said, “On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it”? How come? If it’s just the church — it’s just the people, it’s us — how are we going to hold back the gates of hell from prevailing against the church? Well, Pentecost, remember? When Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit came and indwelt them, and has indwelt everyone who believes since that point. Every one of us who knows the Lord Jesus as Savior is indwelt by this Holy Spirit. And our presence here, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is the thing that’s holding back this evil until the time when that is removed, as we’ll see.

3. A “He” — The Restrainer as a Person

So, grammatically, the word Spirit — *pneuma*, in Greek — is a neuter word. So it would have to be referred to grammatically as a what, a thing. That’s the first thing. So “you know what is restraining” is talking about power, a force. And we’ll see that force is the Holy Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit is also referred to, ungrammatically, as a He. You’ll see that in John 14 to 16. If you look through, even in your English, you’ll see it — that the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a He. And I look at it grammatically and I say, “Wait a minute. The word Spirit is neuter. And here’s the personal pronoun, masculine, referring to Him.” That’s not grammatically right, but it is a reference to Him. So, ungrammatically, He is referred to as a person, because He is a person. So that’s the revelation of the restrainer. We have to know who He is. I take it He is the Holy Spirit.

B. The Demonic Activity — 2:7a

1. The Mystery of Lawlessness

Now, the demonic activity, verse 7a: “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.” Now, remember the word mystery in the New Testament? It’s a new truth, previously unknown, but now given in this age. The church is one of those. The church is a mystery. We see that in Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 5:32. The church is a mystery. And here, the lawlessness during the church age is a mystery. And the whole lawlessness empowered by Satan in the Tribulation is also a mystery.

From the outline: A mystery in the New Testament is a new truth previously unknown before its revelation in the present dispensation (Constable). The church itself is a mystery (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 5:32). The Rapture of the church is a mystery (1 Corinthians 15:51). Here it is the lawlessness during the church age — empowered by Satan, headed up by the Antichrist — called a mystery, *mystērion*.

2. Even Michael Said, “The Lord Rebuke You”

Now, note: the restrainer will have to be able to hold back the power of Satan exercised in the Antichrist. Only God can do that. Even Michael — remember Michael the archangel? Jude records in verse 9 the disputing over the body of Moses. You know, we don’t know where Moses was buried. I’ve been up to Mount Nebo, the last place we know he was, and I’ve looked over to Jericho — and there’s Jericho. You can see it from Mount Nebo. And that’s where he got his last look at the Promised Land. And his body is not there. There’s no tomb.

Why? Well, because Michael was arguing with Satan about what to do with the body of Moses. And Jude records that Michael didn’t say, “I’ll fight you.” He said, “The Lord rebuke you.” Because Satan is the mightiest angel. Michael is just an angel. And Satan — Lucifer — was the mightiest of the angels. So only God can restrain him. So there’s demonic activity, and his activity comes from Satan, and the

lawlessness will have to be stopped not by any human thing, or even an angelic thing, but by God Himself.

C. The Divine Adversary — 2:7b

All right, then there's the divine adversary, 7b: "only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way." The one restraining — I take it that the restrainer is the Holy Spirit in the church. The church — as long as the church is here, it will be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Remember, Jesus said the Holy Spirit "dwells with you and will be in you" — forever [John 14:16–17]. You cannot be dis-indwelt. So if the Holy Spirit is taken out, then the church is taken out with Him. It has to be.

So He — the restrainer — is called a person. The Holy Spirit is a person. So again, He's a force, but He's also a person. So the restrainer is both a force and a person to be reckoned with. Whoever He is, He will be taken out of the way to allow the Antichrist to use his power during the Tribulation period. The Holy Spirit will be taken out. The church will be taken out with Him — is my premise. All right, now, that's the demonic activity.

Study Note — Who Is the Restrainer?

Paul switches from a neuter participle in verse 6 (*to katechon*, "what is restraining") to a masculine participle in verse 7 (*ho katechōn*, "He who now restrains"). Interpreters have suggested several identities — the Roman Empire or human government, Paul and his preaching, an angel such as Michael — but each fails the test the teacher sets: the restrainer must be strong enough to hold back Satan and must be "taken out of the way" at a definite time.

The pretribulational view, held by Walvoord, Ryrie, and Pentecost, identifies the restrainer as the Holy Spirit indwelling the church. The neuter fits the neuter noun *pneuma*, and the masculine fits the personal pronoun Jesus used for the Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13). The Spirit does not leave the world entirely — people will still be saved in the Tribulation — but His restraining ministry through the indwelt church ends when the church is caught up. Because the Spirit's indwelling of believers is permanent ("that He may abide with you forever," John 14:16), the removal of the restrainer and the removal of the church must happen together.

Sources (FGR): Pentecost, *Things to Come*; Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999); Constable, *Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians*; Walvoord and Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*.

II. The Prophetic Climax — 2:8–12

Now, the prophetic climax. Three questions he answers here about the coming of the man of sin. They are when, and who, and why.

A. When — 2:8

1. The "Whom" Clause Describes Him

The first one is when — verse 8. He says, "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming." Now, the clause that begins with "whom" — that is

going to tell you who this person is. He's not saying that he'll be revealed and he'll be consumed and he'll be destroyed all at the same time. No. He's saying, this one is going to be revealed; he's the one that the Lord is going to do this to. So the Lord is going to consume him and destroy him later on, at the end of the Tribulation period, at His coming — at Jesus' coming.

2. Cast Alive into the Lake of Fire — Revelation 19:20

Now, when does He do that? Well, Revelation 19. Revelation 19, verse 20, tells us that this beast — this is another name for the Antichrist — “the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two” — the beast and the false prophet — “were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.” At the end of the Tribulation, when Jesus returns, He'll do that to them.

3. A Thousand Years Later — Revelation 20:10

Now, little note: a thousand years later, at the end of the Millennium, when Satan is cast into the lake of fire, here's how it reads — Revelation 20, verse 10: “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are.” Oh my — they're still there. They're still there. The beast and the false prophet are there. And Satan is being cast into that lake of fire, and they — all three of them — “will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Forever.

So what I'm trying to show is that God is in control of this whole thing. And God's adversary — God is the adversary, the divine adversary, Jesus Christ — is going to handle all three of them: the beast and the false prophet at the end of the Tribulation, and then Satan at the end of the Millennium. Remember, during the Millennium, Satan is bound. But then he's released at the end, and then all hell breaks loose, and Jesus puts all that down and puts Satan into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are.

All right, so verse 8, then, summarizes the career of the Antichrist in three brief lines. He's going to come up, he's going to rebel, he's going to be thrown into the lake of fire. That's him — all done in one verse. So that's the when.

B. Who — 2:9–10a

1. Antichrist's Master — 2:9a

Now the who. Who is the Antichrist? Who is his master? He talks about him here in verse 9. He says, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan.” So this Antichrist who comes is empowered by Satan — according to the working of Satan. We see here that the power of the Antichrist is from Satan himself. There's an unholy trinity in the book of Revelation: Satan, and the beast, and the false prophet. That's the unholy trinity. So the Antichrist, then, has as his master Satan.

2. Antichrist's Miracles — 2:9b–10a

He also — the Antichrist's miracles, 9b and 10a. He's going to come "with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish." See, the reason for the power and signs and wonders is to imitate Jesus. How did Jesus come? They knew He was Messiah. I don't think it was deity, but His messiahship was known by His works, by His miracles. And so, if that's how Jesus is known, one who is going to call himself the Messiah is going to have to do the same thing. So he is doing the power, he's doing the miracles, and he gets the power for the miracles from Satan.

And I think that the miracle workers today are feeding this possibility. The miracle workers today — and they get the attention, you know. Their premise is: wherever these miracles are done, that's where God is. It's from God. All miracles are from God. And they get people calling on the phone: "They did this and this and this." "Oh, wonderful. Look what God did." Well, it seems to me that they're showing everybody, "Wherever there are miracles, God's doing it." Well, suppose the Antichrist does miracles — which he will do, the false prophet for him. People are going to be saying, "Oh, that must be God. God does miracles." I think they're playing right into his hands. So — the Antichrist's power of miracles, and then they will convince those who are perishing that that's God and they are of God.

From the outline: So, when the statue in the temple speaks, the logical conclusion is that the Antichrist is of God. The Antichrist's power and miracles are from Satan. They will convince "those who are perishing."

C. Why — 2:10b

Well, why, then? Why are they perishing? "Because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." They have traded the simplicity of the cross of Christ for the show that the Antichrist puts on. And it is a show. And they fall for all that fakery that he's doing. Plus the wind. And so — the who, and the why. Now, that's the prophetic climax.

III. The Practical Conclusion — 2:11–12

A. Delusion — 2:11

1. It Will Be Sent — 2:11a

Now, the practical conclusion. Verse 11 says there will be a delusion coming. It will be sent. The delusion will be sent: "And for this reason God will send them strong delusion." These people took the first step away from God's revelation when they continued in the state of rejection, missing the Rapture because of their unbelief. And now they find themselves confronted with, and accepting of, the doctrine of the Antichrist.

2. It Will Be Strong — 2:11b

Strong delusion is coming to them. It will be strong. The delusion is so strong that they accept the lie — “that they should believe the lie.” Now, the lie is not just a lie, but the lie. The lie is that the Antichrist is Messiah — the Antichrist is God. And they perish for that. So that's the delusion.

B. Damnation — 2:12

1. Declared — 2:12a

Now the damnation, verse 12. It's declared in verse 12a: “that they all may be condemned.” The reason for their condemnation is their unbelief. All who reject Christ are doomed. The wrath of God abides on them — John 3:36.

2. Deserved — 2:12b

It's also declared, and it's also deserved, because they “did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” See, all rejection of Christ's offer of eternal life — all rejection — deserves eternal punishment. So it's Jesus who metes out that punishment. It's interesting: you reject Him, and then one day you stand before Him, and He says, “Depart from Me.” That's it. So all judgment is placed in His hands — John 5:27. So He will be the one who does the judging.

From the outline: All rejection of Jesus' offer of eternal life, at the expense of His own life on the cross, is deserving of eternal punishment from God.

C. A Question: Can Those Left Behind Still Believe?

Will all people who, as unbelievers, wind up in the Tribulation be unable to believe at that time? I've heard people say this: that if a person hears the gospel and doesn't believe it, after the church is gone, he will not be able to believe. Well, let me suggest a couple of things.

1. Multitudes Will Be Saved in the Tribulation

First, we know for certain that multitudes will be saved in the Tribulation period. First off, the 144,000 — they'll be saved, apparently, right away at the beginning of the Tribulation period. They are God's evangelists, and they'll do the job. They will get the job done. The gospel will go through all the world in that seven years. The church hasn't done it in 2,000. They will do it in just that seven years. And a great multitude are going to be saved — Revelation 7:4 and 9. Multitudes.

2. Multitudes Will Follow the Antichrist

Multitudes will rebel against Christ and follow the Antichrist. So multitudes will be saved even in the Tribulation period, but multitudes will follow the Antichrist as well. And you just read the book of Revelation — read chapters 13 through 16, especially — and you'll see that this happens. So there will be many who will receive the mark of the beast.

From the outline: We do know for certain that multitudes of people will be saved during the Tribulation (the 144,000 and the great multitude which cannot be numbered, Revelation 7:4, 9). We also know that multitudes will rebel against Christ and follow Antichrist (Revelation 9:20–21; 13:14; 16:14). (Ryrie)

3. The Mark of the Beast — No Turning Back

Well, I think it's pretty clear that once a person receives the mark of the beast, that's it. There's no more chance for him. I think that's true — no turning back from that decision. And it may well be that the strong delusion comes upon him then, and he believes that. They believe the lie of the devil — not for a decision made prior to the Rapture, I think. That's just a thought.

Study Note — Salvation in the Tribulation

The teacher's answer fits the Free Grace understanding that eternal life is always received the same way — by faith in Christ — in every age. The great multitude of Revelation 7:9–14 “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”; their salvation rests on Christ's work, not on their own endurance. At the same time, Revelation 14:9–11 warns that anyone who worships the beast and receives his mark “shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” Taking the mark is presented as a final, settled allegiance — which is why the teacher suggests that the “strong delusion” of 2:11 may be God's response to that decision in the Tribulation, rather than to an earlier rejection before the Rapture.

Sources (FGR): Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999); Pentecost, Things to Come; Robert N. Wilkin, ed., The Grace New Testament Commentary (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010).

Conclusion

Now, conclusion. The removal of the restrainer — what we said was a tough topic. Who's the restrainer? Well, remember, He has to be powerful enough to hold back Satan. The Holy Spirit would be that — the Holy Spirit abiding in the church, the church which cannot be dis-indwelt. So if the Holy Spirit is removed, the church is removed as well. If the Spirit is taken out, the church is taken out as well.

I don't know how — it was of divine arrangement, I guess, that Ray and I are doing the same thing at the same time. But I think the reason for that is that if I confuse you, Ray is going to straighten you out next Sunday. Don't miss next Sunday, because Ray has it all done. And if he says anything about what I say, you let me know.

We pray that the Lord will help all of us to see through these things — to see that the Lord is in control. And He wins. I looked at the last page: He wins. And we're winning with Him.

Lord —

④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE

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

Greek Word Study — 2 Thessalonians 2:6–12

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
vv.6–7	κατέχω <i>restraining / restrains</i>	G2722 <i>katechō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Ptc. Acc. Neut. Sg. (v.6); Nom. Masc. Sg. (v.7)	THAY: to hold back, detain, restrain. Significance: neuter in v.6 (“what is restraining”), masculine in v.7 (“He who restrains”) — a force and a person, fitting the Holy Spirit (pneuma is neuter; Jesus calls Him “He”).
v.7	μυστήριον <i>mystery</i>	G3466 <i>mystērion</i> Noun — Nom. Neut. Sg.	VINE: not something mysterious, but truth hidden and now revealed. Significance: like the church (Ephesians 5:32) and the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51), the lawlessness of this age is a newly revealed truth.
v.7	ἀνομία <i>lawlessness</i>	G458 <i>anomia</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	STR: illegality, violation of law. Significance: the spirit of rebellion already at work, which will be headed up by the Antichrist.
v.7	ἐνεργέω <i>is at work</i>	G1754 <i>energeō</i> Verb — Pres. Mid. Ind. 3rd Sg.	STR: to be active, efficient. Significance: Satan’s power is presently operating; the related noun <i>energeia</i> appears in v.9 (“working of Satan”) and v.11 (“strong delusion,” lit. “a working of error”).
v.8	ἄνομος <i>lawless one</i>	G459 <i>anomos</i> Adjective (subst.) — Nom. Masc. Sg.	THAY: without law, wicked. Significance: one of the Antichrist’s many names — “the lawless (wicked) one.”
v.8	ἀναλίσκω <i>consume</i>	G355 <i>analiskō</i> Verb — Fut. Act. Ind. 3rd Sg.	STR: to use up, destroy (cf. Luke 9:54; Galatians 5:15). Significance: the Lord needs only “the breath of His mouth” to end him.
v.8	καταργέω <i>destroy</i>	G2673 <i>katargeō</i> Verb — Fut. Act. Ind. 3rd Sg.	VINE: to reduce to inactivity, render powerless. Significance: his power is brought to nothing; he is cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).
v.8	ἐπιφάνεια <i>brightness (appearing)</i>	G2015 <i>epiphaneia</i> Noun — Dat. Fem. Sg.	THAY: a shining forth, appearing (cf. 1 Timothy 6:14; Titus 2:13). Significance: “the brightness of His coming” — the visible Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.9	σημεῖον <i>signs</i>	G4592 <i>sēmeion</i> Noun — Dat. Neut. Pl.	STR: an indication, miraculous sign. Significance: the same word used of Jesus' miracles (Acts 2:22) — the Antichrist imitates the Messiah's credentials.
v.9	τέρας <i>wonders</i>	G5059 <i>teras</i> Noun — Dat. Neut. Pl.	STR: a prodigy, omen, wonder. Significance: "lying wonders" — real power from Satan put to the service of a lie.
v.10	ἀπάτη <i>deception</i>	G539 <i>apatē</i> Noun — Dat. Fem. Sg.	STR: delusion, deceitfulness. Significance: the effect falls "among those who perish" — those who did not receive the love of the truth.
v.11	πλάνη <i>delusion</i>	G4106 <i>planē</i> Noun — Gen. Fem. Sg.	THAY: a wandering, error. Significance: "strong delusion" is literally "a working of error" sent by God as judgment on continued rejection.
v.11	ψεῦδος <i>the lie</i>	G5579 <i>pseudos</i> Noun — Dat. Neut. Sg.	STR: a falsehood. With the article: "the lie." Significance: not just a lie, but the lie — that the Antichrist is Messiah, is God.
v.12	κρίνω <i>condemned (judged)</i>	G2919 <i>krinō</i> Verb — Aor. Pass. Subj. 3rd Pl.	STR: to judge, condemn. Significance: the condemnation is declared and deserved; all judgment is given to the Son (John 5:27).

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 9 is cited for its 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	Three things must precede the Day of the Lord: the great apostasy, the revelation of the man of sin at his covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27), and the removal of the Restrainer.
I.A The Restrainer — 2:6	A "what" (neuter) and a "He" (masculine). Only God can hold back Satan; the Holy Spirit indwelling the church since Pentecost is the Restrainer.
I.B Demonic activity — 2:7a	The mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Even Michael said, "The Lord rebuke you" (Jude 9).

Outline Point	Key Truth
I.C The divine adversary — 2:7b	The Spirit permanently indwells believers; when He is taken out of the way, the church is taken out with Him.
II.A When — 2:8	The “whom” clause describes him: revealed now, destroyed later at Christ’s coming (Revelation 19:20); Satan joins them 1,000 years later (Revelation 20:10).
II.B Who — 2:9–10a	His master is Satan (the unholy trinity); his miracles imitate Jesus, and today’s “wherever there are miracles, there is God” plays into his hands.
II.C Why — 2:10b	They perish because they did not receive the love of the truth — trading the simplicity of the cross for the show.
III. Delusion and damnation — 2:11–12	God sends strong delusion to believe the lie; condemnation is declared and deserved. Multitudes will still be saved in the Tribulation; the mark of the beast is no turning back.

Part 2 — Study Questions

1. Why does the teacher identify the Restrainer as the Holy Spirit indwelling the church?

Leader answer: The Restrainer must be powerful enough to hold back Satan — only God can do that. Grammatically, verse 6 uses a neuter (“what is restraining”), which fits the neuter word *pneuma*, and verse 7 a masculine (“He who restrains”), which fits how Jesus spoke of the Spirit as “He” in John 14–16. Since Pentecost the Spirit indwells every believer, and He cannot leave the believer, so when He is taken out of the way, the church goes with Him.

2. What is a “mystery” in the New Testament, and what examples does the lesson give?

Leader answer: A new truth previously unknown, but now revealed in this age. The church is a mystery (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 5:32); the Rapture is a mystery (1 Corinthians 15:51); and here, the lawlessness at work during the church age is a mystery.

3. How does verse 8 summarize the career of the Antichrist, and when does the Lord destroy him?

Leader answer: In three brief lines: he will come up, he will rebel, and he will be thrown into the lake of fire. The “whom” clause describes him — it does not mean he is destroyed when revealed. At the end of the Tribulation, at Christ’s coming, the beast and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20); a thousand years later Satan joins them (Revelation 20:10).

4. Why will the Antichrist work signs and wonders, and how does the teacher connect this to some miracle workers today?

Leader answer: To imitate Jesus, whose messiahship was known by His works; one who claims to be Messiah will have to do the same, with power from Satan. Teachers today who say “wherever there are miracles, God is doing it” are preparing people to conclude that the Antichrist is of God when his false prophet works miracles.

5. Will unbelievers left after the Rapture be unable to believe? How does the teacher answer?

Leader answer: No — multitudes will be saved in the Tribulation: the 144,000 and a great multitude (Revelation 7:4, 9). But multitudes will also follow the Antichrist and take the mark of the beast, and that decision appears to be final. The teacher suggests the strong delusion may come on them for that decision, not for a decision made before the Rapture — “just a thought.”

Part 3 — Passage Summary

Verse	Phrase	Summary
2:6	“now you know what is restraining”	A restraining force holds back the man of sin until his time.
2:7a	“the mystery of lawlessness is already at work”	Satan’s lawlessness is presently operating.
2:7b	“until He is taken out of the way”	The Restrainer — the Spirit in the church — will be removed.
2:8	“then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume”	Revealed after the removal; destroyed at Christ’s coming.
2:9	“according to the working of Satan”	His power and miracles come from Satan.
2:10	“they did not receive the love of the truth”	Those who perish rejected the truth that would save them.
2:11	“God will send them strong delusion”	Judicial delusion to believe the lie.
2:12	“that they all may be condemned”	Condemnation declared and deserved for unbelief.

⑤ APPLICATION

Closes the study · personal & corporate

1. Live Like the Restrainer Lives in You

2 Thessalonians 2:7 — “only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.”

Source: ③ Commentary, I.A–C; Study Note “Who Is the Restrainer?”; FGR — Ryrie, Basic Theology.

Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, permanently — we cannot be dis-indwelt. That is our security. It is also our responsibility: the presence of Spirit-indwelt believers is God’s present means of holding back evil. The gates of hell cannot prevail against such a church, not because of us, but because of Him in us.

Reflection: *Do you live as someone through whom God is holding back darkness?*

Practical Step: Read John 14:16–17 and 16:7–13 this week and list what the Spirit does in and through believers.

2. Don’t Be Impressed by the Show

2 Thessalonians 2:9 — “with all power, signs, and lying wonders.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.B.2 and II.C.

The Antichrist will prove that miracles alone do not prove God. Satan can give power, signs, and wonders. The test is not “Did something amazing happen?” but “Is it the truth?” Those who perish trade the simplicity of the cross for a show. Love the truth more than spectacle.

Reflection: *What draws you more — what is impressive, or what is true?*

Practical Step: When you hear a claim of the miraculous this week, ask first what it teaches about Jesus and the gospel.

3. Offer the Simplicity of the Cross

2 Thessalonians 2:10 — “because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.C and III.B; FGR — Hodges, Absolutely Free.

Condemnation comes for unbelief: “the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). Eternal life comes the same simple way — by believing in Jesus Christ, who paid for it with His own life on the cross. The world’s greatest need is not more signs; it is the plain truth of the gospel, offered freely.

Reflection: *Who in your life has never heard the simple offer of eternal life by faith in Christ?*

Practical Step: Write out John 3:36 and 5:24 on a card and use them to share the gospel with one person this week.

4. Remember Who Wins

Revelation 20:10 — “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.A and Conclusion; ② Devotional.

From the restraining of evil now to the destruction of the lawless one at Christ's coming and the final judgment of Satan, God is in control of the whole thing. The divine adversary, Jesus Christ, handles all three enemies. "I looked at the last page: He wins. And we're winning with Him."

Reflection: *What fear would lose its grip if you truly believed the last page?*

Practical Step: Read Revelation 19:11–20:10 this week and thank God specifically for each victory Christ wins.

End of Study · 2 Thessalonians 2:6–12