

FF Notes for Episode 12 - 2 Thessalonians 2

Remember how we have covered how the Dispensationalism teaching, beginning in the 1830's, says that the mystery, church age must conclude before God resumes his dealings with Israel? This is an assumption they make that is not proven from scripture. In their view, most or all of the Olivet Discourse must be talking to "tribulation saints" who are "left behind" after the rapture, which they say occurs prior to the 70th week. If you didn't listen to Episodes 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, you should probably stop this video and go back and see or hear those. Part of the reason for this "pre-trib" rapture theory is that dispensational scholars, and even us Bible students, have noticed things that make us wonder how to reconcile the Olivet Discourse with what Paul says about the rapture in the epistles.

If, as I believe, the rapture is the Mt 24:31 event, then it is after the 6th seal and the church of the body of Christ will be on earth until that happens. This episode will show how well 2 Thess 2 fits with Daniel and what Jesus says in the Olivet Discourse, and tells us that the rapture is not before the final seven years, but is before the Day of the LORD.

In 2:1, we see the phrase "gathering together". Episunagogo, noun form of Matt 24:31 verb "gather" the elect. That doesn't nail it as being the same, but since those words are not used much, it would be evidence in favor of a strong link.

2:2 Word, spirit, epistle, attempts at deception concerning the timing of the Day of the LORD (DL). Interesting that this timing continues to be under attack, because the LORD God Almighty has been explaining this throughout the Bible so His people can be ready. If their thinking is messed up on the timing, other very damaging errors can occur.

DL spoken about through much of the scriptures. Devil wants to mess up our timing on this. N The DL is not the whole 70th week. Acts 2 Peter quotes Joel that it is after the cosmic disturbances of the 6th seal. DL is basically the same as 7th seal, basically the same as wrath. So the deception that was coming at the Thessalonians was that the DL, the 7th seal (as it was later called in Revelation) had come and they had not been gathered as 1Th 4 had described. It would be great deception to teach that born-again believers in the church go through the wrath. 1Th had said 2 times they would not go through the wrath, and it gave a good description of the gathering together. We also remember from Episodes 5, 6 and 7 that tribulation is different than wrath and being saved from the wrath does not mean the church does not go through any tribulation. We read in Matt 24 that great tribulation precedes the gathering event of Mt 24:31.

2:3 Before DL, two things must happen 1) must be a falling away, apostasia, and 2) the man of sin revealed.

3 possibilities for the meaning of the Greek word *apostasia*

1. Falling away of believers Matt 24, Timothy, Peter judgement beginning at house of God (when has it ever been that God did not purify his people through trials?). Finish Faithful believes this is the correct understanding of apostasia.
2. Jews falling away and worshipping antichrist (noun form of apostasia is used in Acts 21:21 where they accused Paul of teaching Jews to apostatize Moses).
3. Standing (stasia) out (apo), in other words, some that that this is the rapture where believers will be standing outside the world because they will have been gathered. Poor support from Greek. Apostasy is always a falling away or rebellion, never a spatial departure.

Further, even pretribulationist scholar Paul Feinberg admits, "If one searches for the uses of the noun "apostasy" in the 355 occurrences over the 300-year period between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D., one will not find a single instance where this word refers to a physical departure." *Kurschner, Alan, various podcasts.*

The 2nd thing that must happen before the DL is the man of sin is revealed. This is the antichrist committing the abomination of desolation as in Matt 24:15 and Daniel 9:27. This is in the middle of the 70th Week, so how can the rapture be before the 70th Week?

2:4 Paul, writing by of spirit of God, is referring to Daniel. This is the abomination of desolation (AD). The Temple will have to exist. It will have to be rebuilt. People working on that right now. It could happen quickly. So far, the flow tells us clearly that the DL is after the AD, so the teaching that the whole 70th week is the DL does not line up with what the Word of God says here. Think of it... the pre-trib logic picks up on the obvious, that the gathering together (rapture) ushers in the the DL. That's why the Thessalonians were attacked by the falsehood that the DL had come, meaning either the gathering together is not true or they missed it.

2:5 Paul told them this when he was there. Acts 17 records that his visit to Thessalonica was 3 sabbath days and then he was run out of town. Some Jews from the synagogue believed, many Greeks. Paul was teaching them this level of detail about end-times and the return. He knew it all from Daniel, Ezekiel, and the prophets and from what he had heard or what God showed him of the content of the Olivet Discourse. Thess are the earliest church epistles he wrote. Paul was teaching them this in the first 3 weeks!! How much have you been taught about this?! How good a job is the church doing on teaching this chapter?! "Houston, we have a problem!" Not sure how much he had told them about the GT, because 1 Thess 4 starts, "this we say by the word of the Lord", which may mean it was new revelation, or does it mean the words Jesus had spoken in the Olivet Discourse? Paul was teaching them from the Old Testament and from the words of Jesus. It isn't that the rapture occurs before God's plan for Israel starts up again. God's dealing with the church and with Israel are interwoven. That's what Jesus was saying in the OD.

2:6-7 Is tied to 2:5. He says they already knew what is restraining the coming of the antichrist because they had talked about it. Paul had taught this to them. Do you know what's restraining? They did! There is some invisible power or powerful being that is keeping antichrist from happening and has been holding this back for 2,000 years. It is holding back this Matt 24 scenario that is so bad he could wipe out everyone if not cut short. Daniel 12 says that it is the worst time for Israel, ever.

The two main teachings on the restrainer are

1. the Holy Spirit, because the comforter came on Pentecost and, according to most of the pre-trib community, will be gone when the church is raptured before the 70th week. That seems like good logic.
2. The 2nd idea is what I was taught is similar. What is holding it back is the church because we have Christ in us and "greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world", so Satan can't do this until the church is gone. Let me ask you, "did the church stop Hitler killing 6 million Jews? Did it stop Stalin? 25-50 million people died during WW2. Did it stop Mao from killing millions (many of them Christians)?" No. Why? Because we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and power (Ephesians 6:10-12).

The power that is in us Christians is not the kind of power that controls world events. Spiritually speaking, what does control that? The principalities and powers in heavenly places. Many times the rulers controlled by wicked spirits from on high kill and persecute the Christians. The following scriptures show the role of Michael as the mighty angel who battles for God's people: Rev 12:7-9, 13:7-10, Dan 10:12-14, Dan 12:1. Did Paul know about Michael and the principalities and powers? He explained this to them when he was with them. Michael stands out of the way (Dan 12:1), or, stands up and kicks him out of heaven as Rev 12 says.

2:8 Agrees with Ezekiel 38-39, Revelation 19 and other messianic prophecies about the destruction of antichrist.

2:9-11. We believe John 3:16 right? After that come John 3:18-21

Agrees with parable of the tares. Everything the prophets have said. God is longsuffering, not wanting anyone to perish. Finally, for Messiah to rule the world in righteousness, the evil people, who will choose AC over JC, need to be taken out. Satan bound, etc.

2:13-17. Be holy. Stand firm. Finish Faithful.

Separated, holy. Does it sound like they should be afraid? Does it sound like they might lose their salvation? Is it glorious to stand firm and finish faithful?