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The Apostasy & The Revealing

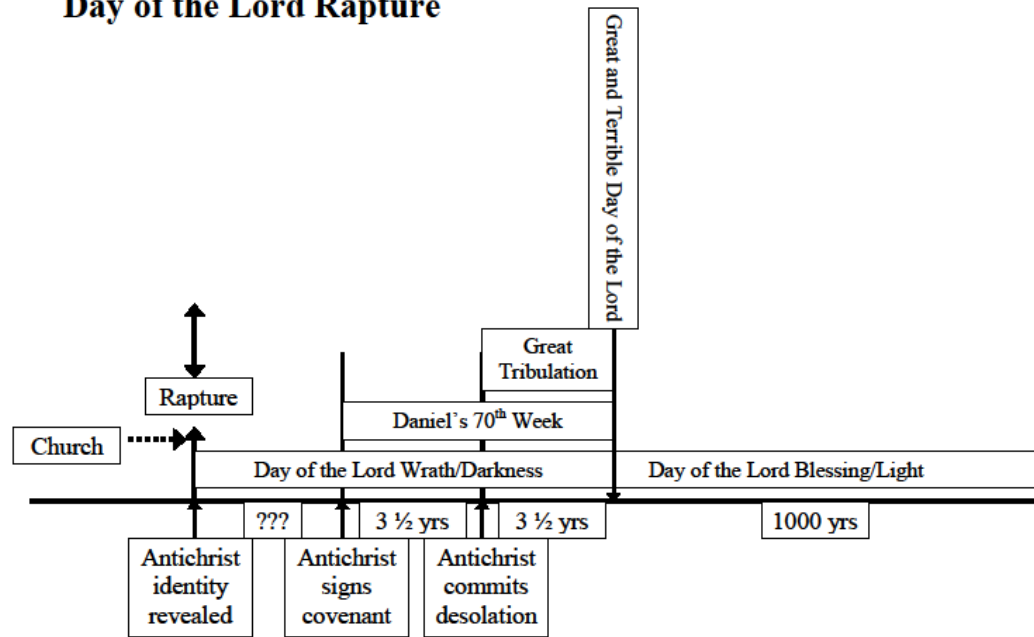
In 2 Thessalonians Paul is writing to some battered Christians. They've lost a number of their members and in that situation you need encouragement. So in chapter 1 Paul Encourages them, first by highlighting their Faith, Love and Perseverance throughout the persecution. This provided a testimony that built up and edified other churches in the region and it also evidenced that Satan was aware of their justification in heaven and was therefore persecuting them. However, God was using the persecution for another purpose - to prepare them for positions of service in the future kingdom of God. God is able to work out even evil for good for those who love God. Second, Paul encouraged them by assuring them that God was just and that those who afflicted them would eventually be afflicted themselves in the apocalypse when the Lord Jesus judged them from heaven by means of His mighty angels resulting in the eternal destruction of their persecutors. Finally Paul encourages them by praying for them, that through their persecutions they would be counted worthy of the kingdom of God and that through all their desires for doing good the Lord Jesus would be glorified, which is the chief end of man.

In chapter 2 we learn that not only was Satan sending persecution but he was also using deception to destroy their stability in a pressure situation. Satan was sending false prophets, false teachers and false letters all containing the false doctrine that they had already entered into the day of the Lord. So Paul is writing to correct this Error that they had entered the day of the Lord.

In verse 1 he says **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**

either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Verse 1 sets the subject matter as the coming of our Lord Jesus and in particular the aspect of His coming where Christians are gathered together to Him.

Day of the Lord Rapture



The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is a complex of events beginning with the Rapture, stretching through the judgment phase of the day of the Lord and culminating with the Second Coming. All of this period of time is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is very important to recognize and I realize there's disagreement over this. Some theologians want it to refer exclusively to the Rapture or to the Second Coming but when all the references in 1 and 2 Thessalonians are looked at they can't be forced into one or the other exclusively, they may emphasize one or the other but all in all the coming of the Lord Jesus is a complex of events.

So Paul says, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus, that is, with regard to this complex of events, and our gathering together to Him. The grammatical construction insists that our gathering together to Him is one aspect of this complex of events. And if we were to turn back to 1 Thess 4:13-18 we would see that this aspect is the Rapture, when the dead in Christ and those alive on earth will be raised and gathered together in the clouds to

meet the Lord in the air. So the particular aspect is the Rapture of the Church and then he goes on to declare the relationship of the Rapture to the **day of the Lord** in verse 2, namely, **that you be not quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.** Paul had taught in the first letter that Christians would not enter the day of the Lord but would be Raptured away from it, 1 Thess 1:10, and that Christians were not destined for wrath in the day of the Lord but for obtaining salvation at the Rapture, 1 Thess 5:9. Since Paul had taught them that they would not enter the day of the Lord it would be disturbing if someone told them otherwise! If suddenly you thought you were in the day of the Lord it would be terribly unsettling because the day of the Lord is judgment, a phase of darkness. It begins with darkness just like the Hebrew day, and it is a day of God's wrath to exterminate sinners. During this period the antichrist would rise to rule over the final Gentile kingdom, the iron legs mixed with clay in Daniel 2 and the terrible beast of Daniel 7. This kingdom is the most ferocious ever to rule the face of the earth and God will judge this kingdom with unbridled wrath. So yeah, it would be disturbing to think that the Rapture was sometime after the day of the Lord had begun.

So Paul in v 3 begins to correct this error by a certain line of argument. There are two possible lines of argument Paul could be making and I want to point them both out because we're entering into a very difficult passage, it's highly condensed, lots of things are in here. What is the apostasy? Who is the man of lawlessness who is also called the son of destruction? What is his program to oppose and exalt himself above every so called god or object of worship? What is the temple of God? Is this the temple that was destroyed in AD70 or is this a future rebuilt temple? Lots of questions here but let me make one point before we begin. Let your eyes scan down to verse 5, is this new teaching? Are these things Paul had never taught the? No, Paul had taught them all of these things. This was not new. Paul was reminding them of what he had taught them when he was with them. So we don't necessarily have this contained in the 1st letter to the Thessalonians, but it was part of Paul's teaching when he taught them face to face, when he was physically in Thessalonica.

Unfortunately we don't have access to all that Paul taught them in Thessalonica. All we have is the letter of 1 Thessalonians he wrote a few

months after he was booted out. So we will have to grapple with some of the things in these verses because we simply don't have access to all that Paul taught them face to face. But it was evidently much more than what we have in 1 Thessalonians. But what I'm going to suggest is that some of what he teaches here was taught in 1 Thessalonians and that it reaches back to what he taught them face to face and so that explains why there is no need to define certain things. For example, the apostasy, the apostasy in verse 3 is not defined, it just says "the apostasy" and we wish Paul had defined the apostasy but he didn't, so we'll have to do some work on the apostasy, but the fact he doesn't define it is evidence that he didn't need to define it to the Thessalonians, they evidently knew exactly what he was talking about and I think you will too after we go through it.

But first, verse 3, **Let no one in any way deceive you**, about what? What's the deception? That the Rapture will occur after the day of the Lord begins and you are already in it. There had been several methods Satan used to deceive them into this thinking; Satan had used false prophets, he had used false teachers and he'd used false letters. Satan inspired all these things in an attempt to convince them that the persecutions they were facing were the same one's their persecutors would face in the day of the Lord, that they had already entered that day. Now that's nonsense. Let me tell you why. First, the day of the Lord is related to Israel not the Church. It's spoken of more than 70 times in the OT and the Church is not in the OT. The Church is a mystery in the OT. Israel is in the OT so it's a truth that relates to Israel. Second, it's a day of wrath and the OT clearly teaches that God stores up wrath for His enemies. The Church is not Christ's enemy, it's His bride so Paul taught in 1 Thess 5:9 that the Church is not destined for wrath. Third, the Church is destined for the Rapture when we will be resurrected as Paul taught in 1 Thess 1:10 and 5:9. So the Church could not possibly be in the day of the Lord as these deceivers claimed. The day of the Lord relates to Israel and the Rapture relates to the Church. To put the Church in the day of the Lord is to confuse the Church with Israel and to get our eyes off of looking for Christ and onto Satan.

However, it is easy to say **Let no one in any way deceive you** but it is hard to resist. Christians for some reason continue to want to put the Church in the day of the Lord. And Paul reveals why in this verse. There are all kinds of ways people do this: the chief one being to change the starting point

of the day of the Lord. They like to move it way down the spectrum and make it just part of the 70th week of Daniel or something; it's all games and the reason so many Christians get involved in these games is because of something embedded in this word **deceive**. The word is *exapatese* and it carries the element of seduction; there's something seductive about the study of prophecy that lures people away. So he could be saying, "Let no one in any way seduce you with false doctrine," and the implication is that false eschatological schemes can be very seductive. Think about how true this is. Here we are in the 21st century and we have all kinds of eschatological schemes. When it comes to the millennium we have a-mill, post-mill and pre-mill, when it comes to the rapture we have pre-trib, mid-trib, pre-wrath and post-trib and when you put those views of the millennium and the rapture together you get all sorts of combinations and permutations. Then you have all sorts of other weirdo's out there like preterists who believe that some or all of prophecy has been fulfilled, so they range from mild to extreme, you have historicists who believe Revelation charts the Church age. Why all these views? I think it's because of what Paul says right here. It's seductive. It seduces us, we can be carried away by the lust of some new prophecy scheme and we start fantasizing about it. So Paul says do not be seduced. I am aware that prophecy is seductive, I'm aware that people get sucked in by it and it destroys their focus.

Don't ever be sucked in by any prophecy scheme that says what? That Antichrist must come before Christ. That is the main seduction. I don't know exactly why other than to say Satan is terribly deceptive. There is something about Satan that fascinates our flesh and so there is fascination with Antichrist and he works overtime to seduce Christians into prophecy schemes that have Antichrist coming next. Where does that put Christ? That puts Christ on the other side of Antichrist. So it gets my eyes focused on Antichrist rather than Christ. And since Antichrist is energized by Satan as v 9 shows then my eyes are really focused on Satan. And that will destroy your Christian walk. Our eyes are to be fixed on Jesus Christ in whom are hidden all the riches of wisdom and knowledge. So be aware that prophecy schemes are seductive. And I personally know such seduction has crept into this congregation in the past and what did it cause? Division. Don't be seduced. The next thing arriving is Christ. Keep your eyeballs on Him!

Alright, now why could the Thessalonians not be in **the day of the Lord**? Because Paul says, **it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed.** So we have two things, both governed by the subjunctive, so it means boom! the apostasy, then boom! the man of lawlessness is revealed; they're very closely associated just like the Rapture and the day of the Lord. As one is occurring the other is initiated, very close, so one, we have the **apostasy come first** and then two, **the man of lawlessness is revealed.** There are two ways you could look at Paul's line of argument and I'll visually depict both of these. One, he could be saying these two things happen before the day of the Lord begins. In this view the day of the Lord cannot be here because the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness have to occur *before* the day of the Lord begins. So in that view the order is apostasy, revealing of man of lawlessness and then the day of the Lord comes. Two, he could be saying these two things happen *after* the day of the Lord begins. In this view the day of the Lord can't be here because the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness aren't here and they occur in the beginning stages of the day of the Lord. So in this view the order is day of the Lord begins with the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness. I tend toward this second view because the false teaching at the end of verse 2 is that the day of the Lord has come, that is, it has arrived with the effect they were in it. If that were true then the apostasy and the man of lawlessness would have been revealed. Since they had not then they could not possibly be in the day of the Lord. Further, I think this second view is best because other passages teach that the day of the Lord is imminent just like the Rapture and if the day of the Lord is imminent then it must occur simultaneously with the Rapture. So if both the Rapture and the day of the Lord are imminent, as the NT teaches, then the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness can't occur before that. They must occur after, that is, in the beginning stages of the day of the Lord. So Paul's argument is this, you can't possibly be in the day of the Lord because the opening events of that day have not occurred.

So what's the first event that opens the day of the Lord? The **apostasy**, and it is undefined here. He simply says the apostasy. What do you mean Paul? What is the apostasy? Obviously from verse 5 the Thessalonians knew exactly what he was talking about. Paul had already taught them these things face to face. So Paul doesn't need to define the apostasy for them, they already know what it is. Then there's us. We don't know. We weren't there.

Most people read this word and think, oh, yeah, doctrinal departure, the church will go from bad to worse so I know what this is, Paul is just saying when the church is apostate. But it's not that easy because it wasn't until 1608 in the Geneva Bible that this Greek word was first translated apostasy, before that it was translated departure. So it is not easy to define the apostasy and that's why there are four major views and variations within the views; there ends up being eight or nine views of the apostasy. So let's look at it.

Now the word itself, *apostasia* has several meanings in the lexicons; to depart, to forsake, to fall away, to abandon, to rebel, to defect. Out of this have come four views. Very quickly, view one is that the apostasy is the Antichrist (appositive), the apostasy that is the man of lawlessness. This was held by some of the early church fathers and no one has held it since. View two says it is a rebellion against God, when the world rebels against human government and political power it is rebelling against the God that ordained human government and political power. View three claims it is a defection from the faith, that's common, and there are several variations, the apostate church left behind after the Rapture, Jews in the 70th week of Daniel who depart from Judaism, unbelievers in the 70th week of Daniel who depart from religion and so forth. Most people think of this view when they read the word apostasy. View four says it is a departure from earth at the Rapture, this view claims that the apostasy is spatial in nature; that is it is spatial movement rather than a doctrinal movement. If you depart from doctrine that is religious apostasy, you're separating from some belief system; it doesn't mean you physically move. These people insist it is a physical movement of the Church from earth to heaven.

From here forward I'm only interested in views three and four. View one is unlikely in the Greek grammar. View two is partially true during that time period. The word does rebel against God. But they do not rebel against all human government and political power, the Antichrist will operate as a human and political power so that doesn't seem to fit. We'll take more seriously views three and four. Let's look at the word ***apostasia***. The only other use of this word in the Greek NT is Acts 21:21 where Paul is charged with teaching Jews to forsake Moses, so that use fits category three, a departure from the religion of Judaism. That's all the NT data we have. But it's pretty flimsy to build your whole case for the meaning of the word in this

context on one reference in a non-related context over in Acts. So more work has to be done. If we don't have any other uses of the noun in the NT do we have any uses of the verb? The verb and the noun come from the same word group, so maybe that will shed some light on the usage. "The verb [for *apostasia*] may mean to remove spatially. There is little reason to deny that the noun can mean such a spatial removal or departure. Since the noun is used only one other time in the New Testament of apostasy from Moses (Acts 21:21), we can hardly conclude that its biblical meaning is necessarily determined. The verb is used 15 times in the New Testament. Of these 15, only three have anything to do with a departure from the faith (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12). The word is used for departing from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19), from ungodly men (1 Tim. 6:5), from the temple (Luke 2:27), from the body (2 Cor. 12:8), and from persons (Acts 12:10; Luke 4:13)." So the first thing is simply that the majority use of the verb is a spatial departure not a doctrinal departure. A second line of evidence is how the verb is used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, which was done about 200 years before Christ. Here we find "that the verb form allows the idea of spatial departure and is used that way many times...." So it was used spatially before the time of Christ. How about after the time of Christ? "It was also understood to have this meaning in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 by the fourth century translator Jerome, where in his text he translates *he apostasia* as the Latin *discessio*, meaning "departure." So it was used this way before and after Christ. This meaning of departure remained in all translations of the Bible until 1608 when the Geneva Bible translated it as apostasy. The King James Version of 1611 followed this translation and has since rarely been translated as it originally was, as a departure. Why did the translators change from departure to apostasy in the Geneva Bible? Nobody knows.

But from the evidence it seems that departure is the best translation. If this is the case then it is a reference to the Rapture itself, a truth which the Thessalonians had already been taught and needed no extended explanation. Therefore it would make sense that Paul would simply say, **for it will not come unless the departure comes first** and leave it at that, with no explanation. The departure would then be a way of summarizing what Paul had taught them about the Rapture. It is a departure. In 1 Thessalonians he referred to this departure in every single chapter, so let's review. In chapter 1:9-10, "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true

God, and to wait [expectantly] for His Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come." So here our departure is pictured as occurring at any moment, we are waiting expectantly for his son from heaven to rescue us away from the wrath to come. Chapter 2:19, "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming?" Here our departure is looked at as going into the presence of our Lord. In chapter 3:13 Paul says, "so that he may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones." Here our departure is looked upon as resulting in our arrival before our God and Father; very clearly we have departed from earth. In chapter 4:13-18 we have extensive revelation about the departure. In summary, starting in verse 16, "for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." And so the departure is looked upon as a departing from earth to meet the Lord in the air. In chapter 5:9 he says of our departure, "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with him." When we depart we will receive our resurrection body, which is our future salvation when we will live together with Him. And finally in verse 23, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely in me: and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is, may our sanctification be complete when we depart to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul has already taught them much about this departure over and over in 1 Thessalonians and so in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 he is summing up what he taught them about the rapture with the word *apostasia*, the departure.

So I would translate it "departure" rather than "apostasy." Other scholars that hold this position are as J. S. Mabie in 1895 who suggested it at the Annual Conference on the Lord's Coming in Los Angeles. He argued that it was a summary of the teaching of the rapture of the church set forth in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18. Dwight Pentecost also held this position, Kenneth Wuest, the Greek scholar out of Moody Bible Institute, and in current times Thomas Ice, a personal friend of mine and director of the Pre-Trib Research Center and professor at Liberty University in Virginia and Wayne House,

also a personal friend of mine who is a Law professor and instructor at Faith Evangelical Seminary in Washington state. Since Paul had obviously taught in 1 Thessalonians at the end of each chapter about the rapture it would seem quite natural that he would not repeat all that teaching about the rapture but rather summarize it all as "the departure." The details were already well-known by the Thessalonians.¹ So I think the apostasy is the Rapture.

Now we come to the revealing of the man of lawlessness and he does give more detail here. So Paul says **Let no one in any way deceive you, for the day of the Lord will not come unless the Rapture comes first**, the Rapture initiates the day of the Lord, it triggers it so to speak, **and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, this is the first thing out of the box. The second thing that follows is this person is revealed, his identity is revealed. Now we will see later in verses 6-7 that his identity is being restrained so that when this restraint is removed then his identity is revealed and you are already in the day of the Lord. But since the Rapture had not come first then the identity of this person cannot be known by any Christian. That's Paul's basic argument. The Rapture which triggers the day of the Lord has not happened because we're still here and the revealing of the man of lawlessness which accompanies the beginning of that day has not occurred either.

Now, we should note that this is definitely an individual that will be revealed because each expression depicting him begins with the definite article. It says **the man of lawlessness and the son of destruction and the opposer and exalter of himself**. So this refers to a very definite person. This person has many names. In Daniel he is called "the little horn," (Dan 7:8), "the prince who is to come" (Dan 9:26), "the willful king" (Dan 11:36), "the beast out of the sea" (Rev 13:1), "the Assyrian" (Micah 5:5), "the king of Babylon" (Isa 14:4), "the son of the morning" (Isa 14:12), "Antichrist" (1 John 2:18) and here he is given three names, "the man of lawlessness," "the son of destruction" and "the opposer and exalter of himself." We typically call this individual the Antichrist but these are all titles that refer to this one individual whose identity is right now being restrained.

Let's look at our chart again. And make a few points about the Antichrist. I make these points over and over because if you think of prophecy as a puzzle and you have hundreds and hundreds of pieces to put together in order to get

the right picture of the puzzle what do you do first? You find the corner pieces, then you construct the frame and lastly you can begin to fill in the frame. Now, it's my suggestion that in constructing the puzzle of prophecy, which is hundreds and hundreds of pieces, that you should find the corner pieces first, the major pieces before you go trying to put the rest of the puzzle together. All the corner pieces directly relate to Antichrist. He is a major, major player and his career is marked by four major events. So the first corner piece is Antichrist's Identity being Revealed (2 Thess 2:3, 6-7). Once his identity is revealed then the day of the Lord has begun and the man of wisdom can identify him by counting the number of his name. Each letter in the man's name has a numerical equivalent and when added together the numbers equal 666. But until his identity is revealed the number of his name cannot be calculated by any human being. So the identification of the restrainer, which we will handle in the coming weeks, is an important subject. The second corner piece of eschatology is Antichrist Signs a Covenant with Israel for seven years of 360 days (Dan 9:27). This covenant begins the 70th week of Daniel. The terms of the covenant are that the Antichrist will secure Israel's borders and provide military protection. So right away you want to recognize that Antichrist is a counterfeit Christ. As Christ has made covenants with Israel so Antichrist will counterfeit the covenants and make his own covenant with Israel. Actually there's a counterfeit Trinity. All three members of the Godhead are counterfeited by Satan with Himself being the counterfeit Father, the Antichrist being the counterfeit Christ and the false prophet being the counterfeit Spirit. In any case, when Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel for 7 years of 360 days, giving them military protection, then Israel will have the peace they need to rebuild the Temple and start offering sacrifices. The third corner piece of eschatology is Antichrist will Commit the Abomination of Desolation (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15). That is, he will enter into the Temple and put a stop to sacrifice. When he does that he will go into the Most Holy Place and exalt himself, claiming to be God. This occurs at the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel as Dan 9:27 and Matt 24:15 teach. At that midpoint he will begin his genocide of the Jewish people. The fourth corner piece of the eschatological puzzle is that Antichrist will be Slain by Christ at His Second Coming. And I don't have this on the chart but this will initiate the millennial kingdom. So the Antichrist is a major player and several of these corner pieces are mentioned in this passage, kind of unique in that no other passage puts so many of the corner pieces in a single passage. But if you have those four pieces in place then you have already

solved about 95% of the puzzle. You get one of these pieces wrong then you will end up way out in left-field somewhere.

So, that gives you a frame. We're looking at two opening events of the day of the Lord. First, the apostasy, which we defined as the departure of the church from the earth at the rapture, and then the man of lawlessness is revealed. These are both closely connected to the restrainer. If he must be revealed then it presupposes his identity is being concealed. I don't want to cover who or what is concealing his identity yet, I want to leave that for later, but I do want to show you that in every generation there are Antichrists. Satan always has someone waiting in the wings.

First, in verse 3 he is called the man of lawlessness. And then down later in verse 7 Paul says "for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work." So we have the man of lawlessness and we have the mystery of lawlessness. Since a mystery in the Scriptures is something that is being covered or concealed then the mystery of lawlessness must also be the man of lawlessness who is to be revealed. As verse eight basically confirms "Then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay." That's the fourth corner piece of the puzzle, Antichrist will be slain. But our point is to observe in verse 7 that Paul says, "the mystery of lawlessness is already at work;" that is, put another way the Antichrist is already at work, there are antichrists in the world today and have been for every generation since Paul the apostle wrote this.

To see a second passage that confirms this turn to 1 John 2:18. 1 John 2 is the only passage that refers to this person as Antichrist, this is the only passage that talks about antichrist which is the most popular term for this person. And he says in verse 18, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour." See, John's perspective is the same as Paul's perspective is the same as Jesus' perspective is the same as my perspective. With the resurrection of Jesus Christ in space and time the last hour of history has come and Satan's time is running out. He realizes, whether we do or not that with the resurrection of Christ the first piece of the new heaven and new earth is already complete. What the resurrection means for Satan is that his program is seriously threatened. He knows his time is running out and he is doing everything he can to stop God's program. So

what he has to do in every generation is have an antichrist or two or three. He's doing everything he can right now to bring the antichrist out into the open. But he can't because the restrainer is prohibiting Satan from bringing the antichrist out into the open. So that alone is going to play a major role in identifying the restrainer. Whoever or whatever the restrainer is it has to be more powerful than Satan. And that basically answers the question as to who the restrainer is if you follow the logic. Actually the identification of the restrainer is not really that difficult even though people argue about it all the time. If you understand that Satan is doing everything he can right now to get his antichrist out in the open and ruling the world then you already have the tools to identify the one restraining!

Now you can see in verse 22 how John is defining an antichrist. "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son." So John has a general view of what constitutes an antichrist and it is more general than most people suppose. It is one who denies that Jesus is the Messiah. The person that does that is the antichrist, and in effect he denies the Father and the Son because the Father and the Son are one; to deny one is to deny the other. So these general antichrists are present in every generation. They are with us today. And Satan has one or two which are his primary candidates to become the Antichrist of verse 18. Because John also taught that there is a specific Antichrist coming; he is the one individual who the restrainer will reveal and who will rise to world domination as bearer of all these titles. And if we live in the terminal generation then one of the living antichrists will be the Antichrist. He could very well be alive today.

So let's return to 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The Antichrist is given three titles here. The first is **the man of lawlessness**. Lawlessness, from the Greek word *anomia*, sometimes translated the man of sin, but this word is much stronger, it means that his goal in life is to oppose the laws of God, to oppose God's righteous laws. That is what? That he is rejecting God as the standard and substituting himself. The Antichrist is going to set out that his laws are the standard for the whole world; he's going to author international law. But since he's energized by Satan then really this is Satan's law. This constitutes lawlessness because it's rebellion against God. God is the standard, not a creature.

Second, he is **the son of destruction** or the man doomed to destruction, the Hebrew idiom **son of** indicates the destiny of the individual, he is doomed to destruction, that is, he is going to be removed from power, he is going to be slain and that's what this title depicts, his destiny.

Third, in verse 4, this too is a title, **the opposer and exalter of himself**. And there is a lot here, everything from here begins to presuppose a Jewish temple, a rebuilt Jewish temple where the Dome of the Rock is located today and that gets people upset, they think that's going to start a war or something. Well, I'm just teaching the Bible. I'm not saying go blow it up, I don't know how it will be removed, for all I know Antichrist himself may blow it up as if he's counterfeiting Christ and cleansing the Temple Mount. Which is actually an interesting suggestion since he will be preparing a temple for himself to be worshipped. But I don't know how it gets removed, I don't know how Islam is finally conquered, but I know it is and I know that this temple will be built right smack dab where the Dome of the Rock is today. I know there are other claimed locations but when you work through all the details of studying alternative temple sites, the only one is where the Dome of the Rock is today. So we'll leave that for next week since we're out of time.

For now catch the argument that we cannot possibly be in the day of the Lord because of the departure of the church from earth which triggers the day of the Lord and the opening event, the revealing of the man of lawlessness who's identity is right now being restrained. Therefore we ought to be looking for Christ, expectantly, any day, because we are to keep our eyes fixed on Him and living in light of His coming, His arrival for us and our gathering to Him is the next prophesied event.

¹ While I think this is the best view I don't think that views three and four are necessarily exclusive of one another. If the departure fundamentally has in view the Rapture of the Church, a spatial departure, then the church would no longer be on earth, the result of which would be a spiritual departure.

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