

## 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Paul is calling the Thessalonians to remember what he has taught them.

Paul reminds them of three things:

1. 2:3-4 - The Day of the Lord has not come because certain events have not yet happened
2. 2:8-12 - What and Who is holding back this day
3. 2:8-12 - Description of the nature of events

Paul only uses the first person singular pronoun "I" twice in this letter.

1. 2:5 – "...I used to tell you these things."
2. 3:17 – the closing, "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand."

2:1 – "coming of our Lord"

- "coming" is **parousia** meaning "advent, a dignitary paid a visit to one of their cities."

"our gathering to him"

- "gathering" is **episunagoges**

"coming" and "gathering" should be interpreted along with 1 Thess. 4:15-17 where "we meet (**pantesis**) the Lord in the air." The **pantesis** or "meeting" in the air occurs when the Lord **parousia** or "comes."

- **Parousia**, coming – is the advent of coming of an official dignitary when they would visit one of their cities. (used 4x in 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:12; 4:15; 5:23 and 2x in 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 2:9)
- **Pantesis**, meeting – is what the citizens of a city would do when an official visited their city. As the dignitary got close to the city the leading citizens of that city would go out to meet the visiting dignitary and escort them back into their city.
  - o 49 BC as Julius Ceasar traveled through Italy it was recorded by Cicero using the word **pantesis**: Just imagine what **pantesis** (meeting) he is receiving from towns that pay him honor."
  - o 54 BC Cicero uses the same word in the same way to describe Octavian's (Caesar Augustus) receptions: "The municipalities are showing the boy remarkable favor...wonderful **pantesis** (meeting) and encouragement."
  - o Matthew 25:6 – the bridal party went out to meet the bridegroom with lit lanterns for a procession to the banquet hall
  - o Acts 28:15 – Christians in Rome went out to **pantesis** (meet) Paul and escort him into their city along the Appian Way (Via Appia)
  - o 1 Thessalonians 4:17 – upon Christ's **parousia** the dead and living believers will **pantesis** (meet) the Lord in the air to escort him either back into heaven or back to the earth.

2:3 – "and the man of lawlessness is revealed (**apokalupsis**), the man doomed to destruction."

- The leader of the **apostasias** will arise or be revealed (like Jesus in 2 Th.1:7 is revealed at the **parousia** of 1 Th. 4 and 2 Th. 2)
- The leader is called by 2 names here:
  - o "Man of Lawlessness" because he will:
    - oppose God's laws as in Daniel 36-37
    - change God's times and laws as in Daniel 7:25
  - o "Man doomed to destruction" because there is no chance of him succeeding. Like Judas was called "son of destruction" in John 17:12 because his plan was also doomed from the beginning
- Compare 1 John 4:3 with 2 Thes. 2:7 ("The secret power of lawlessness is already at work.")
  - o 1 John 4:3 – "The spirit of the anti-christ which you have heard is coming (**erchomai**) and even now is already in the world
  - o "**Erchomai**" means "come", "be brought", "go"
  - o **Erchomai** is also used in Rev. 6:1, "I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, 'Come' (**erchomai**)."
  - o The call to "come" (**erchomai**) by the first of the four living creatures brings the rider on the white horse, or the anti-christ, the man of lawlessness, on the earth.
  - o This living creature of Revelation 6:1 could be the "who" called the restrainer of 2 Thessalonians 2:7. This could mean the sealed scroll of Revelation 5 is the "what" restraining in 2 Thessalonians 2:6.

2:4 – “He opposes (adversary) and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped.”

- Daniel 7:8; 7:11-12; 7:20-27 – the little horn
- Daniel 9:26-27 – the people of the ruler who will come
- Daniel 11:36-12:2 – the king
- Matthew 24:15-31 – the False Christ deceiving in the inner room or wilderness

“And even sets himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be God.”

- The Temple is:
  - The individual believer in 1 Corinthians 6:19
  - The community of believers or the church in 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16 and Ep. 2:21
  - The Temple itself in Jerusalem in Daniel, Jesus (Mt. 24) and Revelation
- Early Christians were positive towards the temple even after 12 Thessalonians was written in 51 AD. (Acts. 21:24-27 and Acts 2:46 and James in Josephus.)

2:6 – “And now you know what is holding him back”

- “now” they know “now because they had been previously told
- “what” is neuter. It is a thing holding back the lawless man, the anti-christ (1 John 4:7), the one who changes times and laws (Dan. 7:25)

“so that he may be revealed at the proper time.”

- “revealed” is passive **apokalupto** meaning unveiled, or an appearing of a Greek god just like Jesus is **apokalypsis** in 2 Thes. 1:7
- “proper time” is **eautou kairos** meaning “his time” which is also just like Jesus in 1 Timothy 6:15: “Until the appearing (**epiphaneia** – an appearance, splendid appearance, sudden visible manifestation of a hidden deity) of our Lord Jesus Christ which God will bring about in his own time (**idios kairos**)
  - **idios** means “one’s own, individually, peculiar, unique”
  - **kairos** means “time”

Other references to Jesus’ appearing are:

- 2 Tim. 1:10 – refers to Jesus’ first appearing
- 2 Tim. 4:1 – “who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom.”
- 2 Tim. 4:8 – “not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”
- Titus 2:13 – “while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ.”

## Mystery of Godliness/Mystery of Lawlessness

### MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

1 Timothy 3:16 – *Beyond all question, the **mystery of godliness** is great:*

*He appeared in a body,  
Was vindicated by the Spirit,  
Was seen by angels,  
Was preached among the nations,  
Was believed on in the world,  
Was taken up in glory.*

- 1 – Jesus is **manifested** in a body  
(“manifested” is *ephanerothe* from *phanerod* meaning:  
Reveal, disclose, expose publicly, make known, cause to be seen.)
- 2 – Jesus did **miracles**  
(“vindicated by Spirit” by miracle power, Acts 2:22, and by the resurrection, Rm. 1:4.)
- 3 – Jesus was seen by **angels**  
(resurrected and seen in the underworld, 1 Pt. 3:19, and the head over all angelic beings, Ep. 1:20-21, 1 Pt.3:22)
- 4 – Jesus was preached among the **nations**
- 5 – Jesus was **believed** on in the **world**
- 6 – Jesus was taken up in **glory**.

### MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS

2 Thessalonians 2:7 – *“For the **secret (mystery) power of lawlessness** is already at work.”*

- 1 - Man of Lawlessness is **revealed** (2 Th. 2:8)
- 2 - Vindicated by Satan with **miracles**, signs, wonders (2Th.2:9) (this also includes a “resurrection” – Rev. 13:12, 14)
- 3 – Exalted by Satan as **head** of his kingdom (Rev. 13:2, 4)
- 4 – Whole **world** is astonished by him (Rv.13:3)
- 5 – Whole **world** follows him (Rev. 13:3) and they **believe** the lie (2 Thes. 2:1-12)
- 6 – Man of Lawlessness is destroyed by the **glory**, or the “splendor” of Jesus’ coming (2 Th.2:8)  
(“splendor” is *epiphania* which means:
  - Manifested glorious appearing
  - It is used to describe the striking splendor of a Greek god’s appearing.))