

LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS

A message exploring how we (Messianic Believers at Beza'el) should live in these increasingly spiritually dark days – drawing lessons from 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

Headings

- Paul's Reasons for Writing (2 Thessalonians Chapter 2) (vs. 1 – 2)
- Precursors to 'The Day of the Lord' (vs. 3 – 4)
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We shall read our way through 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2, section by section

Paul's Reasons for Writing (Verses 1 – 2)

- **False Teaching & Understanding about 'The Rapture' and 'The Day of The Lord'**
 - **Paul Reminds the Thessalonians of His Earlier Teaching**
 - Paul visited Thessalonica in AD 50
 - Paul taught about the 'Rapture' and the 'Day of the Lord' during his visit
 - He reminds them of his teaching – e.g. as given in his first letter to the Thessalonians written in AD 52 (*1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 and 5: 1-10*)
 - Paul writes his second letter to the Thessalonians shortly after the first
 - **He Speaks About 'the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him' (v 1) – which is thus focussing on 'The Rapture' - the coming of the Lord for His bride when all believers meet together with Yeshua**
 - 'The Coming of the Lord' can refer to either of the Lord's end time returns
 - 'The Rapture', a Latin term for what Paul Refers to as being 'caught up' (Greek: *harpazō*) to meet the Lord in the air (see *1 Thessalonians 4: 17*)

*'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.'*

1 Thessalonians 4: 17

- 'The Day of the Lord' which occurs after the Rapture, when Yeshua comes in Judgement (see *1 Thessalonians 5: 2-3*) at the end of the seven year Tribulation period

*'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 labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.'*

1 Thessalonians 5: 1-2

- **The Thessalonians were Perplexed by Persecution**
 - They were **greatly distressed because they had expected the rapture**, the gathering together to the Lord, to take place before the Day of the Lord
 - They had **expected to be taken to glory and heavenly rest**, not left to persecution and divine wrath
 - They had become **confused by the persecution they were experiencing, thinking they may have been in the Day of the Lord (v 2)**

- **This error had been reinforced by some false teaching messages to them,** purportedly from Paul, claiming that they were indeed in the Day of the Lord
- **Paul noted the source of these confusions as "spirit," "word," and "letter"**
 - A "spirit" would most likely refer to a false prophet claiming divine revelation
 - A "word" would refer to a sermon or speech given
 - A "letter" indicated a written report
 - The powerful and harmful effect of this false information was gained by claiming it was from the apostle Paul (v. 2: 'as if from us')

Precursors to 'The Day of the Lord' (Verses 3 – 4)

- **The Day of the Lord**
 - **It is Yeshua's Return in Glory to Rule and Reign**
 - **It is not His Coming for His Bride (The Rapture)**
- **The 'Falling Away' (Greek: *apostasia*)**
 - **It is a Falling Away from, and Forsaking of, Truth**
 - **We see this in the world today**
 - The Forsaking of Truth in Politics and Government and the Media
 - The Lies we are told about Covid & the 'Vaccines'
 - The Lies we are told about Climate Change
 - The Promotion of false Gender Ideology
 - The Lies underlying Economic Policy and Currency
 - ...And much more!
 - **We see this in the church today**
 - The Forsaking of Truth in most Mainstream Churches
 - The Lies of false Churches & Teachers in Modern Churches
 - The Falling away from a Living Relationship with the Lord
 - The lies of Replacement Theology
 - **Paul, in this chapter, continually emphasises the need to adhere to Truth**
- **The 'Man of Sin' is Revealed**
 - **The Son of Perdition (Greek: *apōleia*) meaning ruin, loss or destruction**
 - **The Lawless One (v 8) – the Coming World Leader, a false Christ to whom all will bow**
 - **The Beast from the Sea in *Revelation 13* whose master is Satan**
 - **He is 'the Prince who is to Come' (*Daniel 9: 26-27*) – the Coming World Leader who comes to prominence just before the 7 year Tribulation period**
 - **We have yet to see such a one,** though many have been likely candidates and some are trying today – but he will only appear shortly before the Tribulation begins
 - **The Faithful Church will be raptured (caught up) before that occurs – for they are 'not appointed to wrath' (*1 Thessalonians 5: 9*)**

'For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,'

1 Thessalonians 5: 9

- **The Actions of 'The Man of Sin'**

- **He Opposes and Exalts Himself above all that is Truly God or that is to be Worshiped**
- **He sits as God in the temple of God**, showing (falsely) himself that he is God – the Abomination the Desolates (*Daniel 9: 27; Matthew 24: 15-22*)

Restraining the Coming of the Lawless One (Verses 5 – 8)

- **Paul’s Teaching in Thessalonica**
 - **The Thessalonians had been taught these things by Paul...but had been shaken by the false teaching and perplexed by persecution**
- **Paul says to the Thessalonians – You Know What Is Restraining!**
 - **Restraining (Greek: *katechō*) meaning to hold down or back, to withhold or suppress**
 - **Paul had taught them about the restraint of evil when he was in Thessalonica**
- **The Mystery of Lawlessness**
 - **Lawlessness (Greek: *anomia*) meaning *illegality (i.e. violation of law) or wickedness, iniquity or unrighteousness***
 - **This ‘Mystery’ is Already at Work in the World – ever since the fall, and in the days of the Thessalonians...and increasingly so in our day**
 - Many antichrists (*1 John 2: 18*) – throughout history there have been many who could have become ‘the lawless one’ but they were restrained; e.g. Roman Caesars; Muhammad; Stalin; Hitler; Mao Zedung; Obama?, etc...
 - **It is Still A Mystery – in that It Is Not Fully Revealed**
 - It will be when the one is revealed who so blatantly opposes God that he blasphemously assumes the place of God on earth (The Son of Perdition/ The Lawless One)
 - **The Mystery is Restrained for Now – so that he may be ‘revealed in his time’ – that is, when the Lord ordains**
 - Satan is subject to that which restrains him now...preventing him from bringing forth ‘the lawless one’ to come to power...until God’s ordained time
- **The Restrainer**
 - **Who is ‘the restrainer’?**
 - **Is it Preaching the Gospel?** (*Matthew 24: 14*) – good to bring men to salvation, but this is not a restraint on Satan
 - **Is it a Binding of Satan?** – but Satan is called, in scripture, the God of this World (Age) (*2 Corinthians 4: 4*), the Prince of the Power of the Air (*Ephesians 2: 2*), a Roaring Lion (*1 Peter 5: 8*)
 - **Is it the Church?** – the church is salt and light (*Matthew 5: 13-14*) – but salt and light are not restrainers; salt is a preservative and light is the truth
 - The church is that which preserves God’s truth as a witness to the world
 - The bible makes clear that evil becomes gradually more prevalent towards the end times and there is ‘falling away’ from faith

- **Is it Government?** (*Romans 13: 1-7*) – but governments throughout history have not been restrainers of evil
 - In our day governments are promoting evil and suppressing good – they certainly do not attempt to restrain spiritual forces of evil
- **The Holy Spirit is ‘The Restrainer’**
 - **Neither men nor angels can control Satan** (*Jude 1: 9*)
 - **There is only one in the universe who can restrain Satan**
 - **Who? God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit**
 - **Satan cannot go beyond the boundaries that God permits**
 - It is God Himself who holds back Satan and the revealing of The Lawless One
 - **It is God – active in the world today through the Holy Spirit – He is ‘The Restrainer’**
 - **The Holy Spirit is active in this world chiefly through His presence indwelling believers and the church**
 - Sadly, as the number of apostate churches increases and the number of faithful believers decreases (at least in the West), the restrainer is progressively being withdrawn
 - The Holy Spirit is, of course, not limited to being a restrainer through the church – He and the Father and the Son can act directly – but it is the presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling believers which has a restraining influence on lawlessness
 - Hence, why Paul talks about the falling away preceding the coming of the Day of the Lord – as we have already see, this ‘falling away’ from truth is occurring in the world and in the church
 - **When God’s restraint ceases – then the mystery of lawlessness will come to fulfilment in the Man of Lawlessness**
 - This is the spirit of lawlessness already prevalent in society, but still a mystery in that it is not fully revealed as it will be in the one who so blatantly opposes God that he blasphemously assumes the place of God on earth which God has reserved for Jesus Christ
 - Yeshua’s ‘end-time briefing’ to His disciples (see *Matthew 24*) to us what Living in the Last Days would be like – it seems that ‘all the boxes are ticked’ and we can expect His coming for His bride (Believers) any time soon...it is imminent!
 - Then will follow the revealing of ‘The Lawless One’ and the 7 year Tribulation which ends with Yeshua returning in judgement, to rule and reign on the earth for 1,000 years (the Millennium)
- **The Ultimate End of the Son of Perdition**
 - **The ultimate end of the Lawless One is certain** – the returning Lord, Yeshua, will consume him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him with the brightness of His coming (*Revelation 19: 11-21*)
 - **Yeshua comes to Rule and Reign when His people, the Jews recognise Him and cry ‘Baruch haba b’Shem Adonai!’**

*‘...’ for I say to you, **you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’**”*

Matthew 23: 39

- It is why believers are called by the Lord to love and to pray for the Jewish People and Nation
- Bezal'el has a special call to outreach ministry to the Jewish people

Signs of the Coming of the 'Lawless One' (Verses 9 – 12)

- **Satanic Workings**

- **Power, Signs and Lying Wonders – a false Christ with demonic power, and deceptive signs and wonders**
 - It is Satan who is the master of the 'Lawless One'
 - Satan (the dragon) gives the Coming World Leader his power, his throne, and great authority

'The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.'

Revelation 13: 2b

- **The Coming World Leader (sometimes called The Antichrist) is a false Christ – see *Revelation 13: 3-8***
 - He even appears to have a mortal wound which is healed
 - All the world will marvel at him, follow him and worship him
- **Unrighteous Deception**
 - **Deliberate deceit to cause earth-dwellers to worship a false Christ**
 - **Inducing mankind to turn away from truth**
- **Strong Delusion**
 - **Sent by God – to people who prefer to love sin and lies rather than Gospel of Truth**
 - God Himself will send judgment that ensures their fate in the form of a deluding influence so that they continue to believe what is false
 - They accept evil as good – and a lie as the truth
 - **Thus does God use Satan and Antichrist as His instruments of judgment**

- **Not Loving the Truth**

- **Pleasure in Unrighteousness – God has always judged wilful rejection by giving people over to impurity and degrading passions (*Romans 1: 24-28*)**
 - **So in the last days God will seal the fate of those who persist in rejecting truth and following Satan and, in the Tribulation, his counterfeit Christ**
 - As in all ages, those who habitually reject the truth are judged by being left to the consequences of their sin
- **Loving the Truth is Essential to Eternal Life**
 - **Yeshua said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (*John 14: 6*) – so rejection of Yeshua is rejection of the Father and rejection of His truth**
 - **The Holy Spirit is 'the Spirit of Truth' (*John 14: 16-17*)**
 - **God's Word – the Bible – is Truth (*Psalms 119: 160*) and is inspired by God for our sanctification (*2 Timothy 3: 16*)**
- **It is essential, as we are Living in the Last Days, that we Love the Truth**
 - **Through our relationship with Yeshua (the Truth), and**

- By the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Truth), and
- By the guidance in Scripture (the word of Truth)
- By loving and adhering to truth
 - We will discern the lies of this Fallen World and of Satan
 - We will receive life giving truth to help us – in witness and onwards to our destiny in Yeshua

Paul's Encouragement and Instruction (Verses 13 – 17)

- Paul Reminds the Thessalonians Who They Are in God (Verses 13-14)
 - They are 'Brethren Beloved by the Lord' (Romans 9: 25-26)

'As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved." "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, you are not My people," there they shall be called sons of the living God.'
Romans 9: 25-26

- Beloved – we need to know and experience that we are beloved!
- They are 'Chosen for Salvation', from the very beginning – by God (the Father) (Ephesians 1: 3-6)

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.'
Ephesians 1: 3-6

- Predestined - this is God ordained stability of the election of grace!
- They are being Sanctified (made holy – and set apart from sin and the world) by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3: 18)

'But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.'
2 Corinthians 3: 18

- Sanctification is an ongoing process whose end is glory!
- They are Called to Obtain the Glory of Christ (1 John 3: 1-2)

'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'
1 John 3: 1-2

- Glory – our Lord is shining with the Glory of God – and so shall we be!
- As we are Living in the Last Days we need to continually remind ourselves – and remind each other – who we are in the Lord
 - We need not be worried by Persecution – indeed we should expect it, because the Lord has told us that this is how it would be in the end times
 - Our Hope in Yeshua – our Unshakeable Future with Him – should encourage and sustain us
 - Don't forget – Yeshua told us these things would happen!

- These are ‘The Beginning of Sorrows’ (*Matthew 24: 7-8*)

*“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All **these are the beginning of sorrows.**”*

Matthew 24: 7 – 8

- Praise God we shall be with Yeshua when the ‘Sorrows’ reach their fullness in the Tribulation
- Paul’s Instructions to the Thessalonians – **And to US!** (*Verse 15*)
 - Stand Fast in the Lord – be strong in the Lord’s strength – a firm stand
 - In place of Agitation should come strength and a Firm Stand
 - Stand Fast (Greek: *stēkō*) means to be stationary, unmoved – it is to endure and to persevere
 - Hold On – to Truth which they had been taught (e.g. by Paul, through his teaching when with them, and his letters to them) – being Faithful to the Truth
 - In place of doubt and false teaching should come faithful adherence to the Truth
 - Hold (Greek: *krateō*) means to use strength; that is, seize or retain – it is a determination of mind, by God’s grace and power
 - It is – in these Last Days – even more important to know and hold on to Truth – The Lord will lead you (He is Truth) – the Holy Spirit will guide you (the Spirit of Truth) – and God’s Word will instruct you (His Word is Truth)
- An Apostolic Blessing – – Receive it for Yourself! (*Verses 16-17*)
 - They (the Thessalonians) – And YOU – have the Love of the Father and the Son – and His Everlasting Consolation and Good Hope
 - Know for Sure – You are Beloved of the Lord and of the Father
 - Everlasting Consolation & Hope – a sure and certain hope of glory
 - Paul’s Blessing is Twofold
 - That God would Comfort their Hearts (enabling them to endure persecution)
 - That God would Establish them in every Good Word and Work – enabling them to be Grounded in His Truth and His Purposes for them
 - It is – in these Last Days – ever more urgent that we take every opportunity to share the gospel and encourage our friends and relations to enter into a real and living relationship with Yeshua
 - May I suggest that you make these verses your morning and evening meditation – as we are Living in the Last Days

*“Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, **we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.***

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’

Hebrews 6: 17-20

- Yeshua is Coming for His Bride – **for You and Me – Very Soon!!**

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My email address is: johnagodfrey749@btinternet.com