

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### 2 Thessalonians: Comforting Troubled New Christians With Correct End Times Theology Part II: Correcting Troubled And Persecuted New Christians On Errant Rapture Theology (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Confusion exists today on if the Church will experience either all or part of the Great Tribulation.
- B. This confusion affected new Thessalonian Christians, for someone had taught they were then experiencing the Day of the Lord as evidenced by their persecution, leading some wrongly to stop earning a livelihood, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1704, "Introduction To The Second Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians."
- C. We view Paul's answer to this issue in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 for our own edification as follows:

#### II. Correcting Troubled And Persecuted New Christians On Errant Rapture Theology, 2 Thess. 2:1-17.

- A. Paul wished that his readers "not" be "easily unsettled or alarmed" by "some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come," 2 Thess. 2:2 NIV.
- B. This call was made "(c)oncerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him" in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 NIV, meaning the rapture of the Church, an event Paul described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as the gathering of Christians unto Christ. Thus, the rapture of the Church was a doctrine that was to counter the unrest believers in Christ had over fear that the Day of the Lord had already arrived!
- C. The *way* this *rapture* event was to **COUNTER** such alarm is explained for us in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-14:
  1. Paul called his readers not to let anyone deceive them by any means, for the Great Tribulation would not arrive until there had been an apostasy that would pave the way for the antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:3a,b.
  2. Now, the apostasy was already present in Paul's era (2 Thess. 2:7) as it is today, but the **intensity** of the apostasy predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 will be so great, it will pave the way for the antichrist to rise and oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, be it the true God or false gods, so that he sits in the Jewish temple of God, falsely presenting himself to be God, 2 Thess. 2:3-5.
  3. The reason this intense apostasy has not occurred is that a Restrainer hinders it and the **appearance** of the antichrist *as antichrist* at the **start** of the seven year **Great Tribulation**, 2 Thess. 2:6-8; Daniel 9:27:
    - a. Paul taught that the Restrainer's removal **precedes** the **revealing** of the **antichrist**, 2 Thess. 2:7-8.
    - b. Well, the **antichrist** is **revealed as antichrist** at the **start** of the **seven year Great Tribulation** when he makes a treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:27), so the Restrainer is removed **before** the Great Tribulation!
  4. Now, this Restrainer must be the Holy Spirit Who restrains apostasy through the Church as follows:
    - a. The antichrist is empowered by Satan (2 Thess. 2:9), the god of this world who rules the nations (2 Cor. 4:4; Matt. 4:8-9), so the Restrainer must be the only Entity stronger than Satan -- God!
    - b. The Restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2:6 is mentioned in the neuter gender (*to katechon*), but He is mentioned in the masculine gender in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 (*ho katechon*), and this interchange in neuter and masculine genders is typical of other New Testament references to the Holy Spirit (the word "spirit" is neuter, but the **Person** of the Spirit is masculine), Bible Know. Com., N. T. p. 719.
    - c. Thus, this removal of the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit, must occur when the Church is taken away in the rapture, and the Holy Spirit who indwells it leaves, ceasing His restraint on developing apostasy.
  5. The antichrist's **appearance as antichrist** will then be God's permissive judgment on the world for rejecting Christ, and the antichrist will be presented in such a strong deception by Satan's power that the lost will trust in him, being damned for having rejected the true Christ, 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.
  6. However, since Christians have heeded the Gospel of Christ to obtain Christ's glory versus facing the antichrist, God has destined them to attain the glory of Christ in the Rapture, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.
  7. [Paul's teaching thus argues strongly that the rapture occurs before the start of the Great Tribulation!]
- D. Paul thus called his readers to hold fast to his word that the Church will not face the Great Tribulation, for it will be raptured before it begins as the Holy Spirit, the Restrainer, is removed from the earth with believers in the Pretribulation Rapture. We thus must be comforted and stay productive, 2 Thess. 2:15-17.

**Lesson: The rapture of the Church occurs before the start of the seven-year Great Tribulation Period!**

**Application: May we assert the Pretribulation Rapture view, that the rapture occurs before the start of the Great Tribulation, and thus stay calm and productive in living for Christ, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17!**