

# **PRICELESS SOUL WELL OF REVIVAL**

## **MINISTRY**

### ***The Rapture of the Church - Heavens Hope and Hells Dread***

**Text: 2Ths.2:1-12 (WEB)**

This is one of the most debated texts in the Bible over the years and even is still now one of the most debated.

What is the topic that Paul sets the stage for in the opening verses?

What is our gathering together to Him, and when will it happen?

Can we know who or what is the restrainer holding back lawlessness and the Anti-Christ?

Paul says, "Let no one deceive you in any way.....He says, "Now you know what is restraining him, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season."

Is there really an apostasy, rebellion, or falling away as most translations state, before the man of sin or the Anti-Christ is revealed, or is it the departure of the church?

Was the word translated properly in most translations of the Bible, or has there been an error?

What makes more sense with the context of the Scripture?

Will the church go through the tribulation or not?

Are we appointed to God's wrath or not?

You here some people who have heard the true gospel say, "Well, if I miss the rapture I'll just get saved during the tribulation."

Or, “Well, I’ll just live like hell now and then get saved during the tribulation.”

Will there be second chance salvation for anyone who has heard the true gospel while the tribulation is happening?

**(2Th 2:1) Now, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, we ask you....**

Paul sets up the topic of this passage right in verse one.

He’s always a pretty direct fellow.

He says, “Now, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him.”

He is quite obviously talking about two different events here.

Our gathering together to Him is the rapture or “catching up” of the church or Christ coming FOR the saints and the coming is Christ coming to earth in second advent WITH the saints to put down all rebellion and set up His earthly kingdom.

There is not one scripture in the Bible that says both of these events will occur at the same time.

One is a coming in the air FOR the saints. Jesus does not come to earth for this. It happens in the air.

The other is a coming to earth WITH the saints at the Mount of Olives when it is split in two when He touches down.

Paul says in verse 2 of our opening text:

(2Th 2:2) not to be quickly shaken in your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by letter as from us, saying that the day of Christ had come.

Some false teachers had come to Thessalonica with a letter that had been forged in the name of Paul containing false doctrines about the day of the Lord being at hand.

Why would Paul say , “We ask you not to be quickly shaken and not to be troubled,” if the Thessalonians were getting ready to meet the Anti-Christ and go through the tribulation?

This would be a ridiculous exhortation if this is what was going to happen. Many use Matthew 24 to prove that Jesus will not come at all until the end of the tribulation.

Verse 3 of that chapter is his disciples asking very specific questions:

(Mat 24:3) As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"

They did not ask about a rapture of the church.

They were not aware of such a thing yet.

Aside from this fact, Jesus hadn't gone to the cross yet,

so there's no way there could have been any such rapture!

The questions, again, are very specific:

When will these things be?

What is the sign of your coming?

What is the sign of the end of the age?

Jesus proceeds to list off many things that will happen, such as:

Deceptions, False Christ's, False prophets, Wars and rumors of wars, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes, Offences, Betrayals, Hatred, etc.

Then in verse 27-30 He says:

(Mat 24:27) For as the lightning comes forth from the east, and is seen even to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

(Mat 24:28) For wherever the carcass is, there will the vultures be gathered together.

(Mat 24:29) But immediately after the oppression of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken;

(Mat 24:30) and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

The book of Zecharia, Isaiah and Revelation tell us that He's coming in power sufficient to defeat the armies of Satan, all his fallen angels and demons in one day!

Hallelujah for the glorified Christ!

This in no way describes the rapture of the church.

There is lightning coming from the east to the west.

The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.

Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Nothing is said of the second coming and the rapture happening at the same time!

Quite the contrary. After Jesus tells of these same events recorded in the gospel of Luke, He says in:

(Luk 21:36) Therefore be watchful all the time, asking (praying) that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will happen, and to stand before the Son of Man."

To stand before the Son of Man how?

In rapture escaping all these things.

This is the first mention of the rapture of the church in the Bible.

Why would Jesus exhort his disciples to pray that they may be counted worthy to **ESCAPE** all these things and to stand before the Son of Man if they were going to meet the Anti-Christ and go through the tribulation and destruction in which He previously described?

This would be equally as ridiculous as Paul telling the Thessalonians not to be troubled or shaken in mind that the day of Christ had come!

In verse 3 of our text Paul says:

(2Th 2:3) Let no one deceive you in any way. For it (the day of Christ coming in second advent) will not be, unless the departure comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction,

Do not be deceived....Paul says this many times in his writings....in many ways.

The day of Christ will not come unless the departure comes first.

Most Bible translations say, "Unless the apostasy, or rebellion, or falling away comes first.

But is this really what the word means?

Does this fit the context of what Paul is talking about?

The word means "departure or forsake." It comes from a word which means "something separative." It is a derivative of a word which means "desert, depart, draw away, and to remove."

In verse 4 of our text, Paul goes on to tell how the Anti-Christ will exalt himself above all that is called God or is worshiped...setting himself up as God, and then in verse 5 he says:

(2Th 2:5) Don't you remember that, when I was still with you, I told you these things?

Beginning just two verses after he says in verse 3: that the departure comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction,

In verse 6-8 He says:

(2Th 2:6) Now you know what is restraining him, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season.

(2Th 2:7) For the mystery of lawlessness already works. Only there is one who restrains now, until he is taken out of the way.

(2Th 2:8) Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will kill with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nothing by the brightness of his coming;

Do you see the striking resemblances between verse 3 and verse 6-8 of the same passage?!

Verse 3: The departure comes first, or verse 7: the one who restrains now, until he is taken out of the way, verse 5: and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction, verse 8: Then the lawless one will be revealed,

The reason for the striking resemblances is because this is what Paul is talking about!

He says in verse 6: Now you know what is restraining him, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season.

If Paul could know what or who the restrainer is, and he said the Thessalonians knew what or who the restrainer is, can we not know as well?!

There is no mystery here!

So, who or what is the restrainer or the hinderer of lawlessness in verse 7?

It can only be one thing, no matter what you've been told or what you believe.

Paul says, "Do not be deceived in any way!"

We already know what it is in the immediate context, but let's prove it even further beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In verse 6-8 of our text, we can know:

- 1 It is something already known
- 2 It now hinders lawlessness
- 3 It is strong enough to prevent the revelation of Anti-Christ
- 4 It will hinder lawlessness until it is removed from the earth
- 5 It is called "he"
- 6 It will be removed from the earth before the second advent
- 7 It will not be here when Christ comes to destroy Anti-Christ

The restrainer is one of three things:

- 1 Governments
- 2 The Holy Spirit
- 3 The church

The restrainer of lawlessness must be the one that will be taken out of the world before Anti-Christ can be revealed as verse 6-8 of our text tells us.

Will governments be taken out of the world?

No, because Anti-Christ reigns over many kingdoms, but not all (Dan.7:24 and 11:40-45), and other kings reign over the rest of the earth during the time the hinderer of lawlessness is removed (Rev.11:15 and 16:13-16).

Will it be the Holy Spirit?

No, for He will be here all through the tribulation and forever.



He never leaves the earth! (Jn.14:16; Rev.12:17; Zech. 12,13) Multitudes will be saved by the Holy Spirit during the tribulation, as now (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:1-21; 12:5,17; 15:2-4; 20:4-6)

The only argument used to prove that the Holy Spirit is the hinderer of lawlessness is the pronoun "he".

It is believed that the church could not be referred to as "he", because it is the bride of Christ; that the church is spoken of as a virgin, a woman, and that it is referred to by feminine pronouns.

On the contrary, the church is:

1 Not referred to by feminine pronouns

2 Never symbolized by a woman.

Eph.5:25-27 is often used to prove this in that the church is referred to as "her."

However, once again, these translations of the Bible that translate this word as "her" are biased and incorrect as the word that is translated "her" is gender neutral, not feminine, and means "self".

The WEB translates it properly:

(Eph 5:25) Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it;

(Eph 5:26) that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,

(Eph 5:27) that he might present the assembly (or church) to himself gloriously, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The reason we can be referred to in gender neutral pronouns is because all believers are a part of the body of Christ.

### 3 Never called the bride of Christ (Rev.21:2,9,10)

(Rev 21:2) I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband.

(Rev 21:9) One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were loaded with the seven last plagues came, and he spoke with me, saying, "Come here. I will show you the wife, the Lamb's bride."

(Rev 21:10) He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Obviously, it is quite clear here, that the bride of Christ is the Holy city, the New Jerusalem.

It will include the redeemed of all ages, who will live in the New Jerusalem forever, however, we will not be a part of it until we enter it.

The restrainer is the church as it is called a man:

I'm going to read these scriptures, if you want the references they're on your outline beginning at Eph.2:15 and following:

(Eph 2:15) having abolished in the flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man of the two, making peace;

(Eph 4:13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

The church is called the **body of Christ**:

(1Co 12:12) For as the **body** is one, and has many members, and all the members of the **body**, being many, are one **body**; so also is Christ.

(1Co 12:13) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all given to drink into one Spirit.

(1Co 12:27) Now you are the **body of Christ**, and members individually.

(Eph 1:22) He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things for the **assembly (or church)**,

(Eph 1:23) which is his **body**, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

(Col 1:18) He is the head of the **body**, the **assembly**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

(Col 1:24) Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his **body's sake**, which is the **assembly**;

The church cannot be a man and a woman!

This would be a freak!

It has to be one or the other!

I know there are some who would like to believe that God is a woman, but I assure you He is quite the masculine gender!

Listen to me, the one who restrains till he is taken out of the way and the departure that's about to happen is the rapture of the church!

We're getting ready for the meeting in the air: 1Ths.4:16-18

We're getting ready for the city where roses never fade!

The city that has streets of gold!

The city that has large pearly gates!

The city with mansions on high!

The city where you'll have neighbors like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Elijah!

Where there will no more death, no more sickness, no more depression!

There'll be no more mourning, no more crying, no more sighing, no more pain, because all things will be made new!

There will be no need for light in that city because the Lamb of God is the light!

Hallelujah for the departure, the blessed hope of the meeting in the air!

But are you ready for it?!

You heard me say earlier:

You here some people who have heard the true gospel say, "Well, if I miss the rapture I'll just get saved during the tribulation."

Or, "Well, I'll just live like hell now and then get saved during the tribulation."

Will there be second chance salvation for anyone who has heard the true gospel after the revelation of the Anti-Christ and through the tribulation?

This brings me to the last few verses in our text tonight, verse 9-12:

Listen, some of you in this room need to get this:

(2Th 2:9) even he (the Anti-Christ) whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

(2Th 2:10) and with all deception of wickedness for those who are being lost (perishing, destroyed), because they didn't receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

(2Th 2:11) Because of this, God sends them a working of error, that they should believe a lie;

(2Th 2:12) that they all might be judged who didn't believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Notice the past tense words Paul uses here like: didn't receive the love of the truth; that they all might be judged who didn't believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

From the very beginning of creation the central issue in humanity's relationship with God has been either disregard of the Word and the truth of God or our love for them.

Jesus said: (Mk.8:38).

That response is also a pivotal issue in the last days of this age.

Paul said in (1 Tim.4:1,2).

Salvation will be experienced only by those who through faith in Christ fervently and perseveringly "love the truth," who believe with unwavering conviction what God has said, and who reject all new revelation and teaching that conflicts with that truth.

The God who knows everything about His boundless love, grace, and mercy said unequivocally from His throne after the completed work of Christ on Calvary and after He was ascended to His right hand: (Rev.21:8)

After the departure of the church and the revelation of the lawless one, there will be no more opportunity for salvation for a particular group of people:

This group consists of everyone inside the visible church who, after adequately hearing the truth of God's Word, have willingly and intentionally refused to love that truth and have chosen instead to delight in the wickedness of the world

God will send those individuals a powerful delusion so that they may never again have an opportunity to believe the truth they refused to love.

Is God responsible? In what sense does God send such things?

It is not God's will that any perish, but that all come to repentance (Jn.3:16-20; 2Tim.2:4; 2Pet.3:9; Rev.22:17).

This question is answered in (Rom. 1:21-32).

God gave them over to a reprobate mind because they, by their own choice, exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

If men persist in rebellion, then God gives them up and over to their own ways which will damn their souls.

It is something that He is forced to do because He cannot save men who persist in damning their own souls.

God has made the laws of sowing and reaping and this is the sense in which God has anything to do with such destinies (Gal.6:7-9; Rom.8:12-14).

They are forever doomed to believe a lie and they will be damned forever in the fires of an eternal hell by their own stubborn rebellious hearts,  
where their worm will not die and the fire never goes out,  
where there will be weeping and whaling and gnashing of teeth,  
a furnace or fire,  
eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord,

Jesus will say to the unrighteous "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; (Mat 25:41).

God never wanted any human being to go there, but all the unrighteous will go.

This obviously includes every backslider:(Heb.10:26,27).

These are very sobering thoughts, nevertheless they are the Word of God.

Salvation during the days of the tribulation will only be offered to those who never had an adequate opportunity to receive the knowledge of the truth or to hear and understand the gospel.

There will be the two witnesses, angels, and 144,000 Jewish evangelists proclaiming the gospel (Rev.7:14; 11:3; 14:6-7)

*In closing:*

We have seen very clearly that there is a departure of the church, not an apostasy, rebellion, or falling away which takes place before the revelation of Anti-Christ and the tribulation.

Furthermore, the key to understanding the timing of the book of Revelation is found in two verses:

(Rev 1:19) Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will happen hereafter (after these things);

John wrote the vision he had seen thus far hence the things which you have seen

He then was told to write the things which are.

This is the message to the seven churches immediately following this verse

He was told to write the things which will happen after these things or after the church age, hence ch.4v.1:

(Rev 4:1) After these things I looked and saw a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, like a trumpet speaking with me, was one saying, "Come up here, and I will show you the things which must happen after this."

This is the rapture of the church again.

We do not see the church mentioned again.

That's because we're not here! We're gone!

Everything after Rev.4:1 happens after the rapture.

We've shown that everyone who has adequately heard the word of God and has refused to love it and has chosen rather to initially reject it or to reject it somewhere along the way through backsliding will be sent a strong delusion to believe a lie and will be damned to an eternal fire forever.

My question to you tonight is, "Are you ready for the meeting in the air? Is there anything in this world worth going to hell over?!"



You have to make that decision. No one can make it for you!

And there is no such thing as indecision....

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