



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V25 N26

June 25, 2023

LIVING HOPE

“Mutiny on the Bounty”

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Eternity

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

John 14:1-4



When will the day of the Lord come?

Nowhere is the continuity between Paul’s two letters to the Thessalonians more evident than in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. The chapter opens, “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and *our being gathered to him*” (v. 1), which is a clear reference to Jesus’ coming to *rescue*, which Paul describes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 in these words: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left *will be caught up together with them* in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (vv. 16-17). One commentator writes regarding “and our being gathered to him” (2Th 2:1): “This is evidently a reference to the event described in 1 Thess 4:17, when the people of Christ (whether resurrected or surviving to the Parousia) will be transported to meet him and to be eternally with him” (F. F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 45, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 163).

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul opens by identifying Jesus as the one “who rescues” believers “from the coming wrath” (1:10). And then, in chapter 4, he goes on to explain what he means by “rescues,” describing how resurrected dead believers in Christ and living believers in Christ will be “caught up together” by the Lord to meet him in the clouds (v. 17). Finally, in chapter 5, he assures his readers that believers will be rescued *before* “the day of the Lord” — defined as “the period of history mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament during which God will bring judgment and blessing on the people of the earth in a more direct, dramatic, and drastic way than ever before (cf. Isa. 13:6, 9; Zeph. 1:14-16)” (Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 717) — because “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath” (v. 9).

You can imagine how upsetting any message “asserting that the day of the Lord has already come” (2Th 2:1) and its implications would be to Paul’s readers. It would naturally leave the Thessalonian believers “unsettled and alarmed” (v. 2). One commentator sketches the following helpful overview of the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12:

“In view of the numerous interpretive difficulties associated with this passage — by common consent one of the most obscure in the Pauline corpus — it may be useful to sketch an overview of the basic aspects of the passage. Evidently some time after receiving the first letter, some member of the congregation in Thessalonica had become persuaded that the ‘Day of the Lord’ — which Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6 had indicated would come when least expected and would surprise the unprepared — had already arrived. This apparently caused them a good deal of consternation (and may have been the root cause of their questions about the meaning and significance of the afflictions they were experiencing and about God’s justice; cf. 1:3-5.”

(Paul’s point in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 is not that sudden destruction coming in the day of the Lord will overtake his readers but not surprise them because they will be expecting it. His point is that sudden destruction coming in the day of the Lord will not come upon them at all.)

“Paul and his companions somehow learned of this development, though it seems they were not sure of its cause or origin (cf. 2:2a). In response, Paul informs them that it is impossible for the Day of the Lord to have already arrived because certain events and developments (which had not yet taken place) must first occur (2:3-12). Finally, he urges them to stand firm and hold fast to the teaching they had previously received from Paul and his companions (2:13-3:5)” (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 228).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us – whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter – asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Read in another translation

1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. (ESV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline “coming . . . and being gathered” in v. 1.
- Circle “unsettled” and “alarmed” in v. 2.
- Underline “prophecy,” “word of mouth,” and “letter” in v. 2.
- Bracket “the day of the Lord” in v. 2.
- Box “for” indicating *reason* in v. 3.
- Circle “the rebellion” in v. 3.
- Bracket “man of lawlessness” in v. 3.
- Box “so that” indicating *result* in v. 3.
- Circle “God’s temple” in v. 4.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain why you think Paul is referring to Jesus' coming to *rescue* (1Th 4:13-17) or his coming to *reign* (2Th 1:7-10) in verse 1.
2. Describe in your own words the *mental state* of Paul's readers (v. 2).
3. Explain the *reason* for their mental state (v. 2).
4. *Contrast* what Paul actually taught his readers about the day of the Lord (cf. 1Th 5:1-5, 9) with what they had allegedly been taught by him (2Th 2:2).
5. Explain the *jarring implication* of what they had allegedly been taught by him for their understanding of Jesus' coming.
6. The day of the Lord will not come until two things happen. Identify the *first* thing and explain what it means.
7. Identify the *second* thing and explain what it means.
8. *Identify* this terminally lawless man from his description (v. 4; cf. 1Jn 2:18; Rev 13:1-10; 17:8, 16; 19:19-20; 20:10).
9. Identify the lawless man's consummate act of sacrilege (v. 4; cf. Da 9:27 [cf. Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14]; 11:36-37).
10. **Discussion:** Some Christians ignore the study of eschatology, the doctrine of last things, thinking that it's too difficult, too controversial, or too impractical. Talk about what you think

Commentary On The Text

According to one commentator, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 “comprise the most significant segment” of Paul’s letter. “The rest of the letter either prepares for or follows from this section” (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Thessalonians*, 228). In these verses, the apostle corrects a misunderstanding regarding the *temporal* relationship of “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him” to “the day of the Lord” (v. 1; cf. 1Th 4:13-17). Word of this misunderstanding and the confusion it created in the minds of the Thessalonians was likely told to Paul by the unnamed person who returned after delivering 1 Thessalonians. Another commentator puts the passage in its historical context: “In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul had taught them that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night (1 Thes. 5:2). This instruction raised a question in his readers’ minds. It must have seemed to some of them that the day of the Lord had already come. After all, the persecutions they were experiencing seemed to be what the prophets had predicted when they wrote about the great calamities coming on God’s people and the world in the day of the Lord. The Thessalonians apparently had received instruction from other teachers to the effect that they were indeed experiencing the judgments of the day of the Lord. But if this were so, how could Paul’s previous instruction that they would be caught up and escape the wrath of God coming on the earth be true? Paul wrote this section (2 Thes. 2:1-5) to straighten out the matter” (Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 717).

Put differently, the believers in Thessalonica were taught and so believed that Jesus’ coming to *rescue* (1Th 1:10; 4:13-17) would occur before the day of the Lord (5:1-11). They have been led to believe that his coming for them will spare them the “destruction” (v. 3) of that day. But now they are being told by prophets, other teachers, and in a letter purportedly from Paul that the day of the Lord has already come. No wonder they are “unsettled,” that is, they wavered in their understanding, and are “alarmed,” that is, frightened by their prospects.

Beginning with the warning, “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way” (v. 3; cf. Mt 24:4), Paul goes on to correct their misunderstanding by revealing that two things will happen before the day of the Lord comes (v. 3): 1) “the rebellion” will occur and 2) “the man of lawlessness,” i.e., “the man doomed to destruction” will be revealed.

Regarding the first, while the term *apostasia*, from which the English word *apostasy* comes, “could denote either political or religious rebellion; here the two ideas are likely combined, with the emphasis on the latter

(Holmes, 230, italics added). Jesus predicted that “many will turn away from the faith” before his coming to *reign* (Mt 24:10), a fact echoed in the epistles. For example, Paul tells Timothy, “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1Ti 3:1), and “For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2Ti 4:3-4). Civil disorder will, of course, be part and parcel of this religious rebellion.

Regarding the second, Paul characterizes this evil man in three ways. One commentator writes: “First, as ‘the man of lawlessness,’ he is the epitome of opposition to the laws of God. Satan so indwells and operates through him that his main delight will be in breaking God’s righteous laws. Second, he is called ‘the man doomed to destruction’ – literally, ‘the son of perdition.’ The Hebrew idiom ‘son of’ indicates character or destiny. He belongs to a class so destined. The same expression describes Judas Iscariot (John 17:12), another member of this class. It does not, however, identify this later ‘son of perdition’ with Judas. Third, this individual ‘opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped.’ His direct and determined opposition to the true God will be a leading feature of the continuing apostasy. It will be especially marked by removal of the symbolic articles from the Jerusalem temple. The man of lawlessness will occupy the holy precincts in order to accept and even demand worship that is due God alone” (Robert L. Thomas, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:318). Attempts to identify “the man of lawlessness,” aka “Antichrist,” with a person in the past or the present have proved fruitless. Resemblances to Antiochus Epiphanes, who did not set himself up in the Jerusalem temple as God but committed sacrilege in the same way as the man of lawlessness (1Macc 1:41-61; cf. Mt 24:15); one of the Roman emperors: Gaius (Caligula), who ordered his general Petronius to put his statues in the Jerusalem temple; Claudius, whose son, Nero, minted coins indicating the divine status of Claudius; Nero, who exalted himself to the realm of the divine; one of the popes; Hitler; and others have been drawn. But while the identity of Antichrist remains uncertain, his destiny does not. According to the book of Revelation, when the Lord returns to *reign*, the beast and the false prophet, “who performed signs on his behalf” (19:20), “were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur” (v. 20). By the way, the reference to “God’s temple” (2Th 2:4) suggests that the Jewish temple, or at least that portion of it including the holy of holies, will be rebuilt in the future.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *coming . . . and being gathered* Cf. 1Th 4:13-17. “The coming of the Lord and the gathering of the saints are regarded as closely connected, as the use of a single article shows. They are two parts of one great event” (Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NICNT, 214). “*Episynagōgēs* (‘being gathered’) defines what part of the *parousias* (‘coming’) Paul has in mind. This is the great event he has described more fully in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17—i.e., the gathering of those in Christ to meet him in the air en route to the Father in heaven” (Robert L. Thomas, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:318).

v. 2 *unsettled, alarmed* Cf. “shaken in mind” (ESV); “shaken from your composure” (NET). “Unsettled” may connote “shaken out of your wits” (F. F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 45, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 163), an emotional response, or “shaken from your understanding,” a cognitive response. “At least some of the Thessalonians have become ‘unsettled’ (i.e., have lost their mental composure) or ‘alarmed’ (perhaps ‘agitated’; cf. Mark 13:7) by a claim—in some way attributed to the apostle himself—‘to the effect that’ (NRSV; NIV ‘saying that’) the ‘day of the Lord has already come’” (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 229). Don’t become “unsettled” in this context may mean don’t “waffle in your understanding.” One commentator writes: “This false teaching, which they had swallowed in the short lapse of time since the exit of the Christian heralds from the city and the present, had come to replace the apostolic instruction and had also caused great emotional anguish for the Thessalonians, as the following exhortation suggests. Paul calls the church not to be *alarmed* or frightened (cf. Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 24:37) by this theological novelty, which had brought doctrinal confusion but also emotional instability to the congregation” (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC, 303, italics added).

v. 2 *prophecy, word of mouth, letter* “Some were saying this teaching had been revealed to them by the Lord. And some were reporting teaching they had heard from others. And the Thessalonians received a letter, which was allegedly from Paul, that taught the same error (cf. 3:17). No wonder the new converts were shaken” (Thomas L. Constable, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 717; cf. Green, 303-304). Or perhaps Paul was speculating, not knowing the exact source of the heresy.

v. 2 *day of the Lord* While Jesus will punish the unrighteous with everlasting destruction and exclude them from his kingdom after he comes to reign (2Th 1:6-10; cf. Mt 25:31-46), the inescapable destruction that comes upon the world suddenly like labor pains on a pregnant woman in the day of the Lord (1Th 5:1-10), that is, “coming wrath” (1Th 1:10), appears to occur before he comes to reign. This suggests the term “day of the Lord” has both a broad and a narrow connotation. One author writes: “The expression ‘the Day of the Lord’ has a double sense in relation-

ship to the future. First, in the broad sense it refers to an extended period of time involving divine interventions related to the 70th week of Daniel 9 plus the thousand-year Millennium. Second, in the narrow sense it refers to one specific day—the day on which Christ will return to earth from heaven with His angels” (Renald Showers, *Maranatha Our Lord, Come*, 39).

v. 3 *the rebellion* “‘The rebellion’ represents *apostasia*, from which the English word *apostasy* comes. Usage in LXX and elsewhere in the NT gives this word a religious connotation (Josh 22:22; 2 Chron 29:19; 33:19; Jer 2:19; Acts 21:21). It points to a deliberate abandonment of a former professed position . . . An illustration of this kind of apostasy was that of faithless Jews just before the Maccabean uprising (Dan 8:23ff.; 11:36f.) (Hendriksen, p. 169). A similar defection of professing Christians is elsewhere anticipated (Matt 24:11, 12, 24; 1 Tim 4:1ff.; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3, 4; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:3-6; Jude 17, 18). After the catching away of those in Christ (1 Thess 4:17), all who are truly in him will be gone. Conditions will be ripe for people, especially those who call themselves Christian but are not really such, to turn their backs on God in what they do as well as in what they already have thought. Then their insincerity will demonstrate itself outwardly. This worldwide anti-God movement will be so universal as to earn for itself a special designation: ‘the apostasy’—the climax of the increasing apostate tendencies evident before the rapture of the church” (Thomas, 321-22).

v. 3 *man of lawlessness* “Another major event, in addition to the apostasy, is the unveiling of ‘the man of lawlessness’ (v. 3). This is a person yet to appear who will be completely lawless and whom God will eventually doom to everlasting destruction (cf. Rev. 19:19-21). The prophet Daniel spoke of such a person. He will make a covenant with the Jews but then break it after three and a half years (Dan. 9:27). The making of that covenant seems to be the event that unmasks this individual for who he is: the opponent of Christ. After he has come to power he will seek to make everyone worship himself, and he will claim to be God (cf. Rev. 13:5-8). The title ‘son of destruction’ (v. 3) means one of whom destruction is a distinguishing characteristic” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 2 Thessalonians,” 2023 ed., 23, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2thessalonians.pdf).

v. 4 *God’s temple* I.e., *naos*, which may refer to the Holy Place plus the inner temple, or it may be restricted to the Holy Place (Gary S. Shogren, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, ZECNT, 281); cf. “God’s sanctuary” (HCSB), namely, the “inmost shrine not the temple as a whole” (Morris, 223). Taken literally, “this is probably a reference to the material temple of God that will stand in Jerusalem during the second half, at least, of the Tribulation (cf. Dan. 11:36)” (Constable, “Notes on 2 Thessalonians,” 24). This implies the temple destroyed in 70 A.D. will be rebuilt (cf. Mt 24:15), but if not, “some material building which will serve as the setting for the blasphemous claim to deity which the Man of Lawlessness will make as the climax of his activities” (Morris, 224).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Be assured that the day of the Lord's wrath, which will be preceded by the coming of Jesus to *rescue*, will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Have you ever seen those cheesy tabloids in the aisle of the grocery store checkout? I vividly remember being in line one day and glancing to the side to see the cover of a magazine featuring Sadaam Hussein riding a velociraptor. The headline read "Saddam Husein's Secret Weapon - Dinosaurs." The absurdity of that article has stuck with me all these years, reminding me to use discernment in the things I read. Now, we know that most false claims will be a little less transparent. In fact, the most destructive lies tend to be the ones with a hint of truth. In this passage, Paul reminds the church of two important truths. First, and most importantly, that Jesus will return. The second reminder is a little less transparent, but equally valuable: that our enemy will do his best to trick us or distract us from Biblical truth. One of our key roles as parents is to teach our children discernment, especially in their media consumption and as they interreact with a world in such opposition to Christ. The world loves to whisper sweet-sounding words into our kids' ears. They need God's Word hidden in their hearts to prepare them to discern ultimate truth. I want to challenge you this week to spend some time in prayer about how you can further challenge your kids in their knowledge and love of God's Word. Maybe this looks like targeted Scripture memory or learning the words to a new praise song. In any case, we can hold on to the truth that Christ is coming again, and we have the joy of reminding our family of that this week.

**This week's edition of the Family Scrolls written by Lilly Ryan, KinderKix Coordinator.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.

1. Who is Paul writing to in this letter?
2. What does Paul remind the church in Thessalonica will happen before the Lord returns?
3. How does Paul describe the "man of lawlessness"?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean to be "easily unsettled"?

What Do You Do?

Watch an episode of your child's favorite TV show or read a favorite book. Discuss the characters and if they are making choices that align with a biblical worldview. Bonus points if you can find a verse or passage of Scripture to go with it!

CORE COMPETENCY: Eternity

I believe in heaven and hell and that one day Jesus will come again.

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purposes."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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