

ANTICHRIST CANNOT APPEAR UNTIL...

Part I

That Presently Preventing this Man's Appearance

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ [‘the Day of the Lord’] is at hand.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away [‘the apostasy’] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that when I was with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let [‘he who now hindereth will hinder’], until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:1-9).

That seen in II Thess. 2:6, 7, preventing the appearance of “the son of perdition” (the Beast, Antichrist), has been an enigma to numerous Bible students over the years, though it shouldn’t be. Exactly as seen in other passages of Scripture, presenting similar problems for many (e.g., I Tim. 2:12-15; Heb. 6:4-6), *understanding and interpreting Scripture contextually and in the light of related Scripture can ONLY shed a flood of light on the subject.*

God simply *has NOT* stated things in His Word which cannot be understood through the method which He has provided — *comparing Scripture with Scripture.* And the converse of that is equally true.

BUT, comparing Scripture with Scripture, one invariably finds himself involved in the numerous ways God has structured His Word (Heb. 1:1, 2), which would have to include things such as *types* and often *metaphors* and *signs*. And *a person simply CANNOT interpret Scripture in the light of itself APART FROM recognizing and utilizing this structure, understanding and interpreting the Word accordingly.*

I Thessalonians

First, let’s note the whole of that which has preceded in I Thessalonians, leading into that then dealt with in II Thessalonians. Then we’ll center more on the text and immediate context in II Thessalonians chapter two, working from there out into other related Scripture.

I Thessalonians could be summarized as a *dissertation to those in “the church of the Thessalonians” relative to the contents of Paul’s gospel*, with the word “gospel” (Gk., *euaggelion*), as it is used throughout the epistle (used seven times), referring to this particular facet of the overall gospel message (1:5; 2:2, 3, 8, 9; 3:2, 8).

Paul’s gospel, having to do with “the mystery” revealed to him at the outset of his ministry (Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:1-6), was a message *to the saved, NOT the unsaved.* It had to do with the continued good news one was to hear *AFTER* he had heard and responded to the gospel of the grace of God

(e.g., the gospel of grace seen in Eph. 2:8, 9, with the continuing aspect of the good news, corresponding to Paul’s gospel, seen in v. 10).

(For additional information on Paul’s gospel, refer to the author’s pamphlets titled, “The Mystery,” “Paul’s Gospel,” and “Paul and the Gospel.”

Note also that the word “gospel” in the epistles is used *FAR* more often relative to the gospel of the glory of Christ [that aspect of the overall gospel message which Paul referred to as “my gospel,” “our gospel” (cf. II Cor. 4:3, 4, NKJV, NASB, NIV)] than it is used relative to the gospel of the grace of God.)

This aspect of the good news is introduced in I Thess. 1:5 as “our gospel,” setting the stage for the use of the word *gospel* throughout both epistles. And, as Paul referenced this aspect of the good news different ways in Romans chapter one (“gospel of God,” “gospel of his Son,” “gospel of Christ” [vv. 1, 9, 15, 16; cf. Rom. 2:16; 16:25]), he does the same thing in I Thessalonians (“gospel of God,” “gospel of Christ,” “good tidings [‘gospel’] of your faith” [2:2, 8, 9, 3:2, 6]).

Note II Thess. 2:14 pertaining to the content of Paul’s gospel:

“Whereunto he called you by *our gospel*, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Then note the crux of the message, emanating from a proclamation of this good news which Paul was writing about to those in this Church, as seen in I Thess. 2:11, 12:

“As ye know *how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you*, as a father doth his children.

That ye walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (cf. I Peter 5:6-10).

This then merges into a section on the rapture and that which lies beyond the rapture relative to the Son’s coming kingdom, seen in the latter part of chapter four and the first part of chapter five (4:13-5:10). Then, the remainder of the book has to do with Paul’s closing remarks.

II Thessalonians

The second epistle to the Thessalonians simply continues from where the first left off, beginning with *TWO types of Christians at Christ's coming*, at the end of the Tribulation. I Thessalonians left off with matters surrounding the rapture and subsequent accounting of Christians, preceding the Tribulation (4:13-5:10), *wherein these TWO types of Christians had been seen — the FAITHFUL, who had heeded Paul's exhortations; the UNFAITHFUL, who had failed to heed these exhortations.*

For one (the faithful), removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, "salvation" awaited; for the other (the unfaithful), removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, "wrath" awaited (5:1-9).

Then II Thessalonians chapter one begins with events occurring at a time at least seven years later, following the Tribulation, following Christ's return. And again, *TWO types of Christians are seen.*

The faithful are seen realizing an inheritance, realizing the "salvation" of I Thess. 5:9, in "his kingdom and glory" (II Thess. 1:5, 10-2:1); and the unfaithful are seen being denied an inheritance in His kingdom, realizing the "wrath" of I Thess. 5:9 (II Thess. 1:6-9).

(To understand the preceding any other way, as so many do, [e.g., seeing I Thess. 5:1-10 and II Thess. 1:5-12 dealing with *the Tribulation* and *saved-unsaved issues during and following the Tribulation*, or see I Thess. 5:9 and II Thess. 2:1 dealing with *the rapture*], is to throw about any type sound Scriptural interpretation one can think of to the winds — plain reading of the text, contextual, comparing Scripture with Scripture, etc.

When this is done on a scale which encompasses almost the whole of Christendom — which is exactly what is currently happening — is it any wonder that today's Christendom finds itself described in the words of Rev. 3:15-17, because of that seen in Matt. 13:33?)

With the preceding in mind, note how II Thess. 2:2ff continues from the way that the book is introduced, drawing from the whole of Paul's prior message to the Thessalonians in his first epistle.

In the first chapter of II Thessalonians, Paul projects matters, as they relate to Christians, out into the Messianic Era (with the groundwork having been laid in his first epistle to the Thessalonians).

Then moving into the second chapter, someone had evidently spread false information among the Thessalonians relative to the matter at hand (via "word" or "letter," as from Paul), making the Christians in Thessalonica believe that they were presently in the Lord's Day, leaving them quite confused.

("The day of Christ" [II Thess. 2:2] should be translated, "the Day of the Lord.")

"The Day of the Lord" *has always been in existence, but NOT on earth. The Lord's Day begins on earth ONLY at the end of Man's Day, at the end of the Tribulation following Christ's return.* This is the manner in which the matter is set forth any place this is dealt with in Scripture [e.g., Joel 2:1ff; 3:1ff; Zeph. 1:7-18].

This is why, in I Thess. 5:2 and Rev. 1:10, Christians removed from the earth in the rapture, removed from Man's Day, *will find themselves in the Lord's Day.*

And the widespread, erroneous teaching that the Lord's Day overlaps the last seven years of Man's Day is one of the main causes of the numerous false teachings in I, II Thessalonians, among other places.)

Now, with the preceding in mind, note that II Thess. 2:2ff deals with the Lord's Day *on earth, NOT in the heavens.* The Thessalonians had evidently been taught that they were now in the Lord's Day, in the Millennium. And *nothing about existing conditions matched that which was supposed to exist on earth, where they still resided, during that future day.* Understandably, they could only have been confused.

Paul begins straightening matters out by calling attention to two things *which MUST occur BEFORE the Lord's Day could exist on earth* — things, with related events, which had not yet occurred.

An apostasy MUST occur first ("a falling away" [v. 3, KJV] is from *apostasia* in the Greek text, meaning "apostasy"), and the man of sin (*the one who will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*) *MUST also be revealed first* (v. 4).

NEITHER of these had occurred.

"The mystery of iniquity" (v. 7), which could only relate to *Christians* (ref. Part II of this pamphlet series), was already working. *But this MUST reach a final stage, which, according to related Scriptures, would be complete apostasy* (cf. Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8; Rev. 3:14-20).

And, as previously stated, *the man of sin MUST be revealed, along with an outworking of the things stated about him* (vv. 3-12).

ONLY THEN could the Lord's Day exist on earth.

Then Paul stated that there was *ONE thing*, in conjunction with the apostasy, *which MUST occur before the man of sin could be revealed*, allowing Man's Day to subsequently end and the Lord's Day to begin on earth.

And *that ONE thing* is spoken of as something presently in existence *which held back* the appearance of the man of sin (v. 6), something *which had to be removed* before the man of sin could be revealed (v. 7).

But, at what point during the Tribulation will the man of sin be revealed — seen by his actions at the beginning (Rev. 6:1, 2), or seen by his actions starting in the middle (Rev. 6:3, 4)?

Things spoken of in II Thess. 2:3ff about the revelation of the man of sin have to do with events occurring in the middle of the Tribulation and extending throughout the last half (Matt. 24:15ff). But, within the revealed mannerism which he will exhibit in that day (vv. 4a, 9) there appears to be an allusion to his actions throughout the Tribulation.

But all information on a subject is not given one place in Scripture, which is why Scripture *MUST* be compared with Scripture in order to begin seeing a more complete picture. These and other related things will be developed in Part II of this pamphlet series, which will center on that which is preventing any present revelation of this man.

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