The Removal of the Restrainer

2 Thessalonians 2:6-12

Introduction:

The last time, Paul gave us two reasons why the Thessalonians could not be in the Day of the Lord. You will remember that the Day of the Lord is a period of time that has judgment (7years – the tribulation) and blessing (1000 years – the millennium) on this earth. The “Day of the Lord” starts with “the tribulation”

“Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?” (2 Thess. 2:5)

1. “There must be a falling away” - The Great Apostasy -- This is not just the apostasy of a few people or in one particular place. There was apostasy going on as Paul wrote this epistle. There was even more apostasy when John wrote his epistles. This apostasy will be worldwide and church-wide.

2. The man of sin (lawlessness) must be revealed -- The man of lawlessness will be on the earth before he is revealed as this man. He will make a covenant with Israel for a 7 year period. Dan. 9:27 (read vv. 24-27 for context) People who are biblically aware will recognize this man as the anti-Christ. It is that event that starts the prophecy clock for Israel ticking again.

There is a third reason:

3. The Restrainer must be removed.

I. The Present Conflict – 2:6-7

A. The Revelation of the Restrainer – 2:6

“And now you know what is restraining, (neuter Ptc.) that he may be revealed in his own time.”

“and” connects this verse with what Paul has said in the previous verses. Notice that the restrainer is a thing, a force. (Neuter. Ptc).

Paul may have told them in person who this restrainer is, but he is not that specific here. We do know that the restrainer has to have the power to hold back the evil from the church until the proper time. The word, sprit - isneuter noun. So, it is grammatically correct to refer to Him as an “it”, especially when His power is being emphasized.

He is also, contrary to grammar, referred to as “he.” You may observe both of these in John 14-16. In the clause, “that he may be revealed in his own time. The “he” and the “him” refer to the anti-Christ. He restrainer will hold the anti-Christ back until his proper time comes.

B. The Demonic Activity – 2:7a

“For ﻿﻿the ﻿﻿mystery of lawlessness is already at work;”

A mystery in the New Testament is a new truth previously unknown before its revelation in the present dispensation. (Constable)

* The Church, itself is a mystery (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 5:32)
* The Rapture of the Church is a mystery (I Cor. 15:51)
* Here, it is the lawlessness during the church age. This lawlessness, empowered by Satan, headed-up by the anti-Christ, is called a mystery-μυστήριον.

Note: The restrainer will have to be able to hold back the evil power of Satan exercised by the Anti-Christ. Only God can do that. Even Michael, the archangel, did not try to fight against Satan, but said, “the Lord rebuke you” (Jude 9)

C. The Divine Adversary – 2:7b

“…only ﻿﻿He who now restrains *will do so* until ﻿﻿He is taken out of the way.”

In this verse the restrainer is called a person (Masculine). So, the restrainer is both a force (a what) and a person (a he).

Whoever He is, He will be taken out of the way to allow the anti-Christ to use his power during the tribulation.

II. The Prophetic Climax – 2:8-12

A. When – 2:8

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, ﻿﻿whom the Lord will consume ﻿﻿with the breath of His mouth and destroy ﻿﻿with the brightness of His coming.”

The clause beginning with the word, “whom,” is not expressing what will happen along with the revelation of the Lawless one, but is used to describe who he is:

He is the one whom the Lord will consume and destroy later on – at the end of the Tribulation period at His coming to the earth,

Revelation 19:20

“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and ﻿﻿those who worshiped his image. ﻿﻿These two were cast alive into the lake of fire ﻿﻿burning with brimstone.”

Note: One thousand years later, at the end of the millennium, when Satan is cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:10

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ﻿﻿where ﻿﻿the beast and the false prophet *are.* And they ﻿﻿will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Verse 8 summarizes the career of the anti-Christ in three brief lines.

B. Who – 2:9-10a

1. Antichrist’s Master – 2:9a

“The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan,”

We see here that the power of the anti-Christ is from Satan.

2. Antichrist’s Miracles – 2:9b-10a

“with all power, ﻿﻿signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among ﻿﻿those who perish,”

The reason for the “power, signs and wonders” is to imitate Jesus. Anti-Christ is passing himself off as Messiah. So Satan gives him power to work miracles. The “miracle-workers” today are preparing the way for this deception. Their premise is that wherever there are miracles there is a work of God, because only God can perform miracles.

So, when the statue in the temple speaks, the logical conclusion is that the anti-Christ is of God. The anti-Christ’s power and miracles are from Satan. They will convince “those who are perishing.”

Why are they perishing?

C. Why – 2:10b

“because they did not receive ﻿﻿the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

They have traded the simplicity of the Gospel for the show of the anti-Christ and all his fakery.

III. The Practical Conclusion – 2:11-12

A. Delusion – 2:11

1. It will be Sent – 2:11a

“And ﻿﻿for this reason God will send them delusion,”

These people took the first step away from God’s revelation. Then they continued in that state of rejection, missing the rapture because of their unbelief and now find themselves confronted with and accepting of the doctrine of anti-Christ.

2. It will be Strong – 2:11b

“strong delusion, ﻿﻿that they should believe the lie,”

The delusion is so strong that they accept the lie that the anti-Christ is God and perish in the act.

B. Damnation – 2:12

1. Declared – 2:12a

“that they all may be condemned”

The reason for their condemnation is their unbelief. All who reject Christ will be damned. The wrath of God abides on them (John 3:36)

2. Deserved – 2:12b

“who did not believe the truth but ﻿﻿had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

All rejection of Jesus’ offer of eternal life at the expense of his own life on the cross is deserving of eternal punishment from God. It is Jesus Who metes out that punishment since all judgment has been placed in His hands (John 5:27)

Question: Will all people who, as unbelievers, wind up in the tribulation, be unable to believe at that time?

1. We do know for certain that multitudes of people will be saved during the Tribulation (the 144,000 and the great multitude which cannot be numbered, (Rev. 7:4 and 9). We also know that multitudes will rebel against Christ and follow Antichrist (Rev. 9:20–21; 13:14; 16:14). (Ryrie)
2. There will be many who will receive the “Mark of the beast” i.e. believe “the lie” (v. 11)

It would seem that there is no turning back from that position.

1. It may well be that is when the strong delusion comes on them for that decision, not for a decision made prior to the Rapture.

Just a thought!

Conclusion: