

2Thessalonians 2: Explaining the coming of the man of lawlessness. KV 3

The chapter explains why it's erroneous to consider that the day of the Lord has arrived.

1. Calling them to be unaffected by errors on the day of the Lord. 1-2

It is evident in v2 that the confusion is that the day of the Lord "has come" or has already begun because the Greek is "enistemi" or literally "standing in now". In v1 Paul also says it concerns the coming of Christ and our gathering to Him, the latter referring to the rapture. However since Christ is not obviously with them, the error couldn't be that He has arrived. The best way to harmonize the passage is to firstly understand that the day of the Lord refers to not just a day but a period when the Lord will directly intervene and consummate His redemption. Christ's coming is within it but other passages like Joel 2:8-3:6 also show that the "tribulation" is the early part of this period. Secondly, we need to appreciate that Christ's coming is not one but a two-event affair. In 1Thess.s 4:16-17, Christ comes to gather the saints but in 1:8-9 is the second event when He will battle the antichrist (2:8). So, some must have thought that the rapture, the first event of His coming, has occurred (1). They then wrongly conclude that the day of the Lord has started and that they are in the "tribulation" (2). This seems to fit with the persecutions they are enduring but Paul proceeds to explain in the next section why this is erroneous.

2. The particulars on the advent of the man of lawlessness. 3-12

The day of the Lord cannot be here because the antichrist, referred to as the "man of lawlessness" has not yet appeared (3-5). Note that the "first" in v3 is not predicting that the antichrist must come before the day of the Lord. Otherwise it would contradict Paul's prophecy in 1Thessalonians 5:2, that the coming of the day of the Lord is unknown, like a thief in a night. Rather it is stating that an apostasy or the great rebellion against God will precede the antichrist's advent. Details on "the day of Lord" are in the Bible, as here and in Revelation, making them predictable once the period starts but the beginning is unpredictable (Matthew 25:13). The antichrist can be identified for he will act as God in the temple demanding worship (4). In Greek, the temple has an article suggesting that it is the Jerusalem's temple which must therefore be rebuilt. Paul also explains why the antichrist cannot be now present and it is because of a restraining (6-7). Interestingly in Greek, it is a neutral gender in v6 indicating a "system" but a masculine in v7 showing that it is a "he". This is a key reason for taking the Holy Spirit as the "he", acting in the Church, the "system", to restrain the antichrist. The antichrist can only come after the church is taken away, that is in the rapture. He will deceive many (8-10) but note in v11-12 they are only those who took pleasure in wickedness rather than believing in Christ.

3. Standing firm in the truth. 13-17

In v13-15, Paul states in contrast that the Thessalonians would not be deceived because God has chosen them for salvation. Nevertheless they are still commanded to stand firm (15). This is holding to the apostolic traditions that are taught, which is now the NT. All contradictory messages, be it a spirit or from a letter outside the NT must be rejected (2). Finally in v16-17, God would provide strength and comfort, the latter must be because of their persecutions.

Lesson to Ponder: Amazingly God saves us to ultimately gain the glory of Christ (14).

第二章：解釋不法之人的出現

鑰節：3 節

本章解釋為甚麼認為主的日子已經到來是錯誤的。

1. 提醒他們不要因對主的日子錯誤理解而受到影響—1-2 節

從第 2 節很明顯看出為甚麼帖人會誤解主的日子已“到了”或是已經開始了。原來到來的希臘文是“enistemi”，直譯為“蓄勢待發”的意思。第 1 節保羅說到關於基督的再來和我們到祂那裏聚集的事，這應是指著被提一事而言。不過因為基督當時並不是與他們同在一起，所以不應錯解為祂已經到來。要更確切地理解這段經文，首先得明白主的日子是指到一段時期而非是某一天，而在這段日子之內主會直接回到地上和成就祂的救恩。在基督再來期間，約珥書 2:8-3:6 和其他經文都描述到有大災難會在初階段發生。另一方面，我們要曉得基督再來時會有兩件事情分別發生。帖前 4:16-17 說到基督會來招聚聖徒們，而本書的 1:8-9 則提到另一件事，就是祂會與敵基督展開大戰。所以，可能有些人會誤以為被提即祂來的第一件事已經發生了（1 節）。他們作出錯誤的結論，以為主的日子已經開始，而他們是在“大災難”之中（2 節）。他們當下所面對的逼迫確讓他們有這樣的聯想，但保羅進一步解釋為甚麼這看法有誤。

2. 圍繞不法之人出現時會發生的事—3-12 節

主的日子不可能已經到來，因為敵基督就是那“不法之人”仍未出現（3-5 節）。留心第 3 節的“以前”一詞，這並不是預言敵基督一定會在主的日子之前出現，否則這就和保羅在帖前 5:2 的預言互相抵觸了。在那裏保羅指出主的日子是無人知曉的，就像夜間的賊來到一樣。它其實是說明離經叛道，或者是極其抗拒神的事會比敵基督的出現來得更早。“主的日子”的詳情在聖經已有言明，包括這章和啟示錄都作了描述，這日子一旦展開會是怎樣我們都能得知，但它甚麼時候開始卻是無法預計的（馬太福音 25:13）。敵基督是誰會被識別出來，因為他會裝作神在聖殿出現，並且要求人去敬拜他（4 節）。在希臘文聖殿這字之前有冠詞，意表著那是耶路撒冷的聖殿，所以聖殿應該會被重建起來。保羅並解釋了敵基督為甚麼當陣子還未出現，那是因為他受到攔阻（6-7 節）。有意思的是在希臘文那作攔阻的在第 6 節是以中性表示，顯明那是個“體制”，而在第 7 節則是陽性，那是個“他”。所以這是為甚麼我們會認為是聖靈藉著教會攔阻著敵基督，因為聖靈是“他”，而教會則是那“體制”。只有當教會被提之後，敵基督才能夠出現。敵基督會迷惑許多人（8-10 節），但留意 11-12 節，那些受迷惑的都是喜愛不義和不相信基督的人。

3. 在真理中站穩—13-17 節

在 13-15 節保羅指出帖人並不會受到迷惑，因為神已揀選他們得救。不過無論怎樣他們都得堅固站穩（15 節），就是抓緊他們從使徒們所領受的真理，即我們現今的新約。任何相反的信息都要拒絕，幸勿論是靈的宣講或者是新約以外的書信都是（2 節）。最後在 16-17 節，曉得神會賜他們力量和安慰，後者定是因為他們正在面對逼迫的緣故。

思想心得：神救贖我們最終是要讓我們得著基督的榮耀，這實在令人驚歎（14 節）。