

“The Man of Lawlessness”

2 Thess. 2:3-9

Finding Peace in the Midst of the Storm

“This is undoubtedly one of the most difficult passages in the whole New Testament.” (Barclay, Thessalonians, 212).

“We must bear in mind the gaps in our knowledge, and not be too confident in our interpretations of this notoriously difficult passage.” (Morris, Thessalonians, 213)

Last week we noted two primary truths from verses 1 and 2.

- **First**, the Lord is coming and will gather us unto Himself (v.1)
- **Secondly**, there is no possible way for you as a believer to miss it (vv.2, 3)

Let us begin by reading verses 3 through 9. We will note the events preceding the Lord’s coming. All three are inseparably linked.

I. There is an apostasy that will precede His coming (v.3a).

“The definite article stands before the word *apostasy*; therefore, Paul is not talking about just any departure from the faith but about a special and well-known one. It is *the* apostasy which will come before the Day of the Lord.” (Ryrie, Thessalonians, 103).

Before the Lord returns, there will be a “global” defection, divorce, or separation from faith and God. Currently such things already exist in certain geographical locations, but there is coming a day when such things will be universally experienced.

II. This apostasy includes a revealing of the man of lawlessness (v.3b)

The mystery of lawlessness is currently present, but its embodiment in an individual is still yet unrevealed.

This individual is described by several statements.

- A. He is the man of lawlessness (v.3b).
- B. He is the son of destruction (v.3c).
- C. Everything he is opposes God (v.4a).
- D. He sets himself up as God (v.4b).
- E. He is connected to Satan (v.9).
- F. The destruction of the man of lawlessness will be part of our Lord’s appearance (v.8).

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III. The one who is currently restraining the man of lawlessness will be removed (vv.6, 7).

Several seed thoughts exist from this passage.

- **First**, there is a force of evil in the world.

- **Second**, God is in control.

Evil is not winning, Satan has not gained any ground, life is not spinning out of control, and you are not a victim of a meaningless plot (Gen. 50:20, Judges 9:23, 14:1ff, 1 Sam. 16:14, Job 1:21, Prov. 16:4, Isa. 45:6, Amos 3:6). Evil is not an activity outside of God's larger agenda. Evil is part of God's "all things." Evil in its expression bows its knee before omnipotence.

No matter how evil the situation in which you find yourself, remember this, evil is the tool of God in the outworking of His eternal purpose. Nothing can separate you from His love.

- **Third**, the ultimate triumph of God is sure.

Listen to Revelation 21:1-8.