



WHAT THE  
BIBLE  
IS ABOUT

2020  
SESSION  
3

WHAT THE  
BIBLE  
Is ABOUT

Paul's Second Letter to the

Thessalonians



Il giorno del Giudizio Generale, quando Cristo, seduto sul globo, giudicherà i vivi e i morti. Gli angeli suonano le trombe, e i morti risorgono. I giusti salgono in cielo, mentre i dannati sono gettati in inferno. La città di Gerusalemme è distrutta, e il fumo si alza dal suolo. In basso, si vedono i dannati in tormento, e in alto, i beati in gloria. La scena è divisa in due parti principali: il paradiso a sinistra e l'inferno a destra.





**Le Jugement dernier. (The Last Judgement)**

Jean Cousin le Fils (1522-1594)

1585

Louvre, Paris







- In three or four weeks in Thessalonica, Paul had planted a church and taught them the basics, leaving Silvanus and Timothy to follow up. When the two rejoined him in Corinth, they reported that people were concerned that those who had died would not see the return of Christ. So Paul wrote (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17):

<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.



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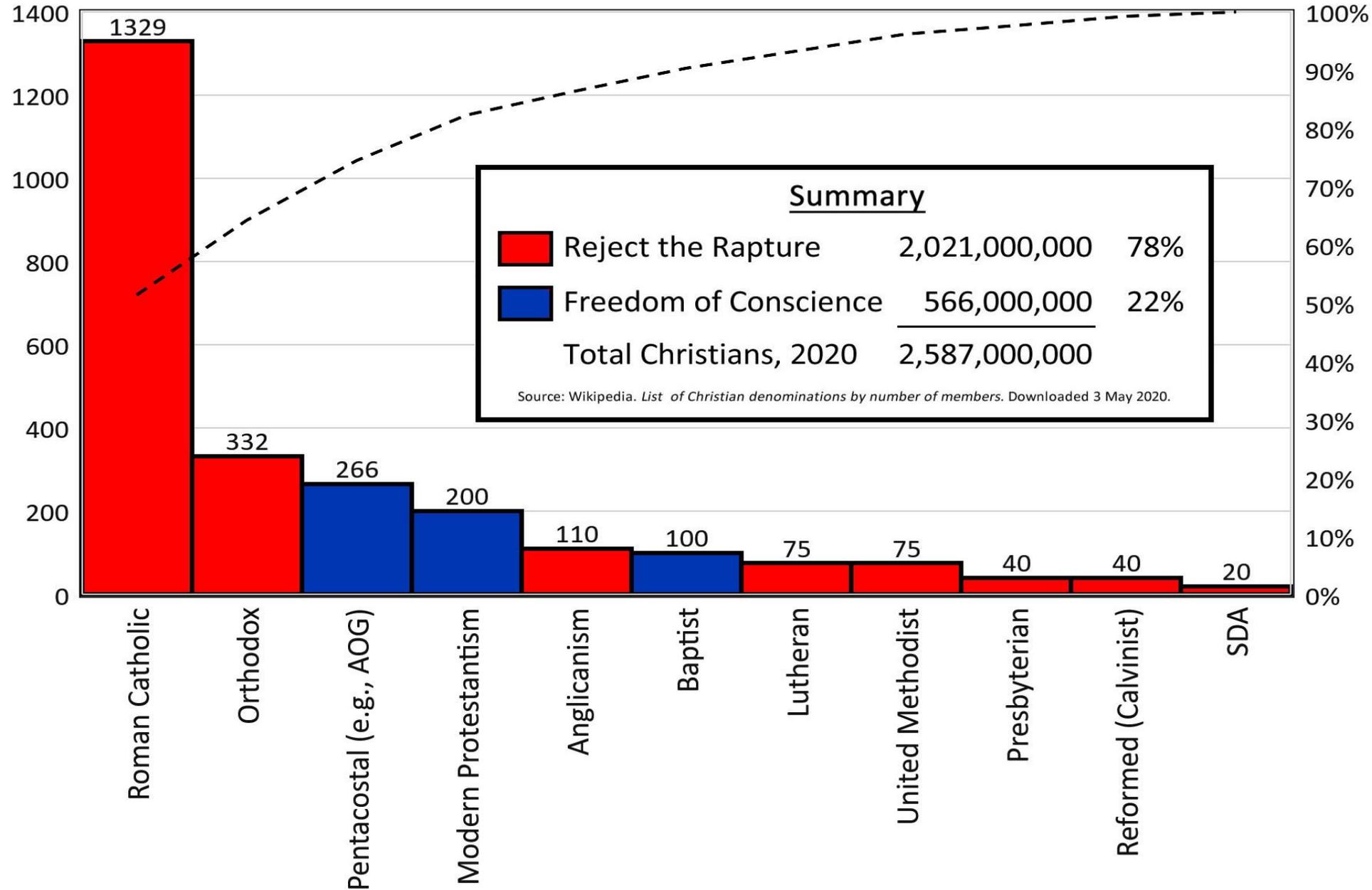
# THE DAY OF CHRIST

Paul's most famous and contentious declaration is of a "Rapture" (*rapiemur* (Latin), ἀρπάζω (Greek)), which means to seize, carry off by force; to claim for one's self eagerly; to snatch out or away).



# World Christian Denominations - 2020

(Membership in Millions)



**early**

**Papias**

(AD 60-130)

**Clement of Rome**

(90-100)

**Ignatius of Antioch**

(98-117)

**Justin Martyr**

(110-165)

**Irenaeus**

(120-202)

**Tertullian**

(145-220)

**Hippolytus**

(185-236)

**Cyprian of Carthage**

(200 to 258)

**Methodius**

(270-312)

**Ephraim the Syrian**

(AD 306-373)

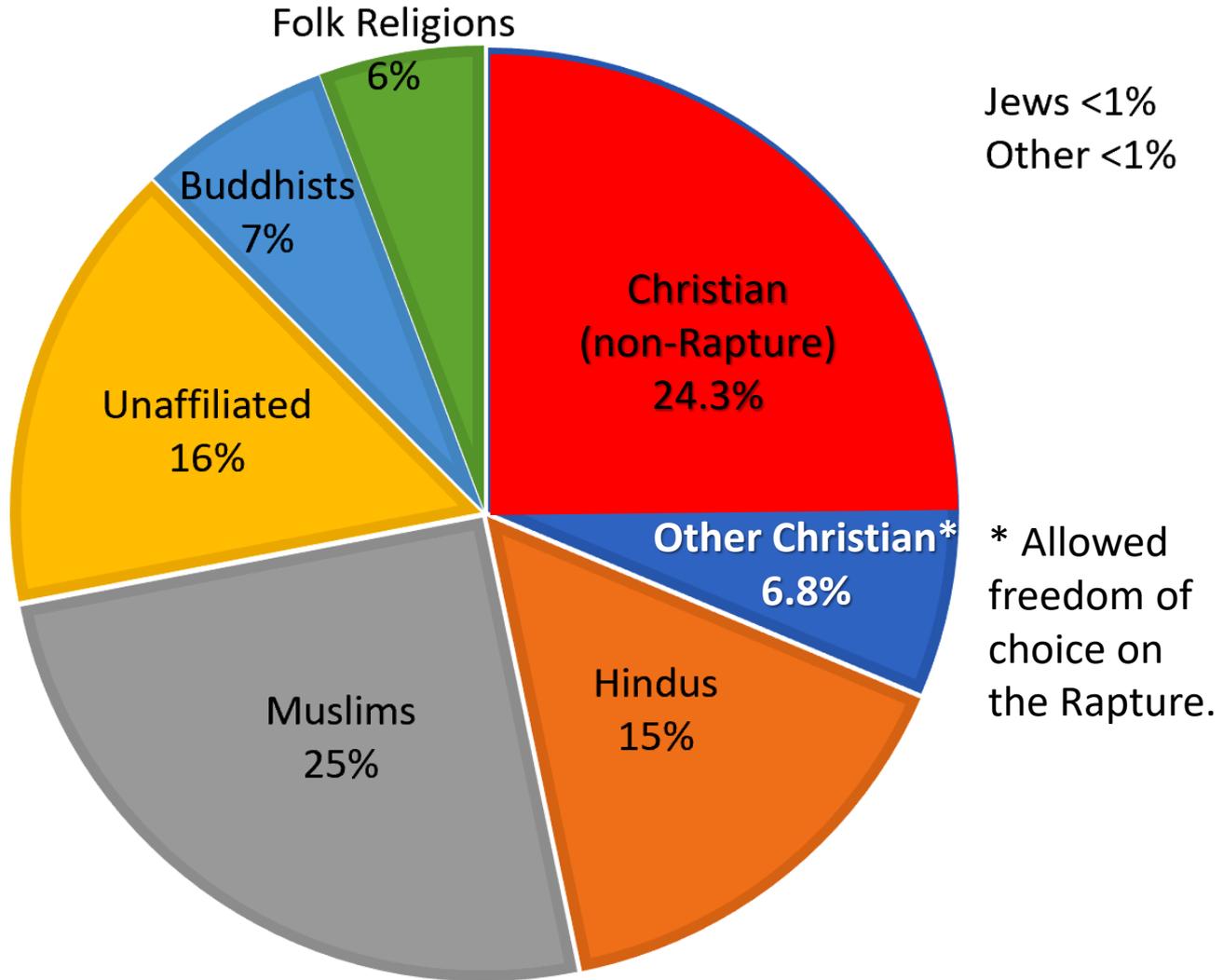


“The Rapture” pallet knife acrylic painting by Millie Gift Smith (2013)

**et cetera**

# WORLDWIDE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, 2020

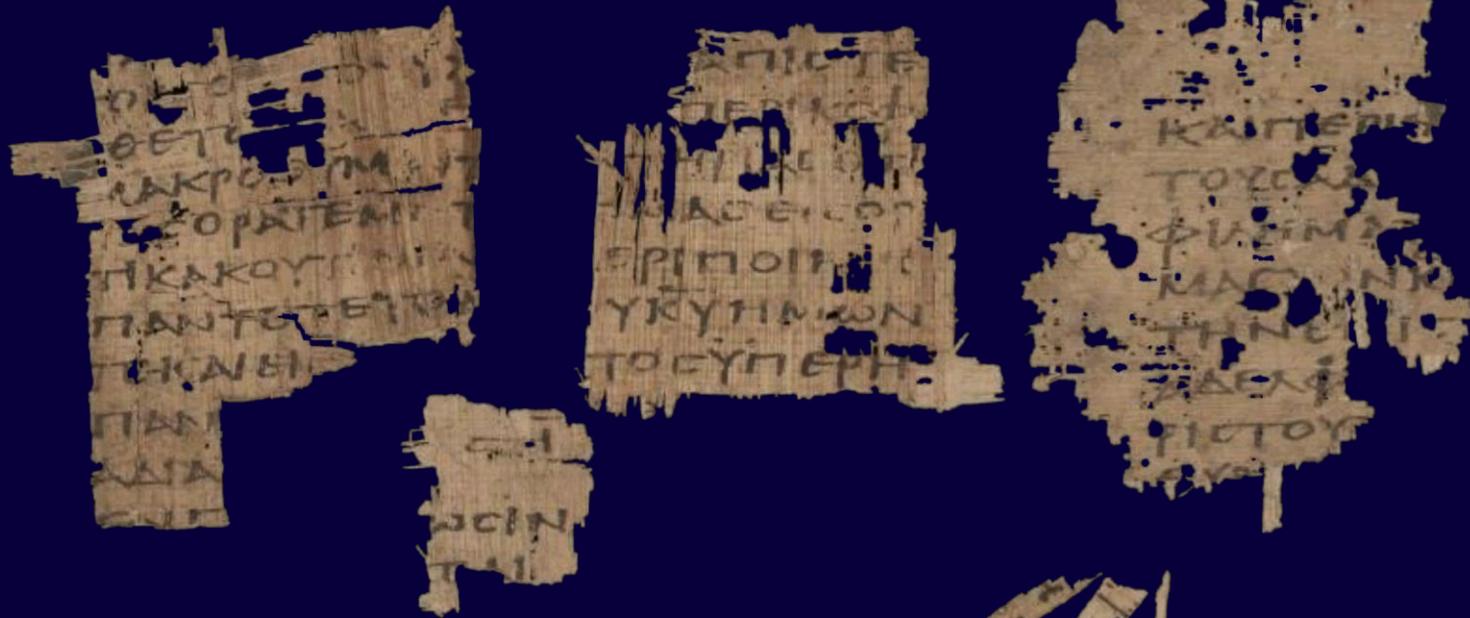
- Christians
- Hindus
- Muslims
- Unaffiliated
- Buddhists
- Folk Religions
- Jews
- Other Religions



Source: Pew Research. Population by religion - worldwide. Downloaded 3 May 2020.



# Why a Second Epistle



Papyrus P<sup>30</sup>, c. 200-300 AD, Ghent, Belgium

# to the Thessalonians?

A detailed illustration of a hand writing a letter. The hand is holding a quill pen and is positioned over a piece of parchment. The parchment is laid out on a wooden surface. In the upper left corner, there are three small inkwells containing different colored inks: black, blue, and green. To the left of the parchment, there is a lit candle in a holder, casting a warm glow. The overall scene is set in a historical or medieval context, with the parchment showing signs of age and the lighting being soft and focused on the writing process.

Dear Thessalonians,  
The day of the Lord  
is at hand.  
Paul

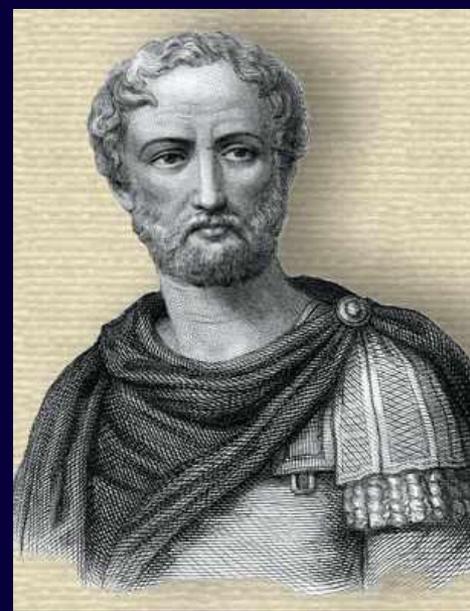


Dear Messieurs,  
I have the honor of  
receiving your letter of the 10th  
inst. and in reply to inform  
you that the same has been  
forwarded to the  
proper authorities for  
their consideration.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

# Pliny the Elder on Thessalonica

*It was in Thessalonica that the first Gentiles were killed in the Roman Empire. The local Roman governor in that part of the country said that every Christian had to bow before a statue of Augustus Caesar. He had been deified and statues of Caesar were erected everywhere. Christians who didn't obey the edict were persecuted... It was in Thessalonica that they dreamed up the procedure of offering a cask of wine on the altar to Venus or Caesar, and then publicly taking it out to the marketplace, sprinkling all the vegetables, meat, and other goods, announcing that it had all been dedicated to the god... Anyone who bought or ate any of it thereby worshipped a false god... Christians who stopped buying in the marketplace as a witness immediately became marked. The first crucifixions, the first burnings, and the first great persecutions of Christians began then.*



## **GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS**

(AD 23/24–79)  
called **Pliny the Elder**

Roman author, a naturalist and natural philosopher, naval and army commander, and a friend of emperor Vespasian.

50 A.D.



**Diocletian**  
(284–305)

**Claudius**  
(41–54)

**Valerian**  
(243–260)

**Nero**  
(54–68)

Persecuting  
Roman  
Emperors

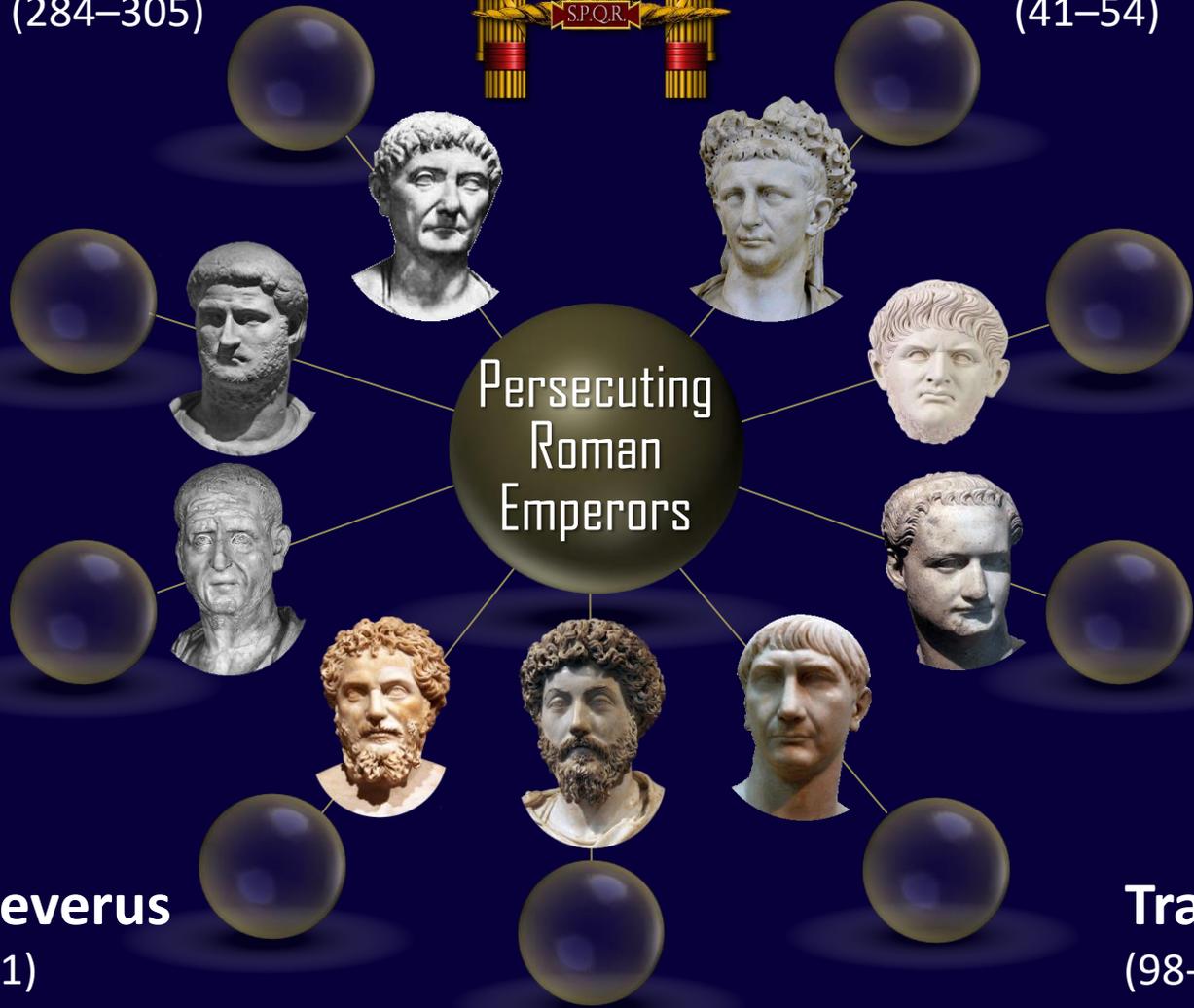
**Decius**  
(249–251)

**Domitian**  
(81–96)

**Septimius Severus**  
(193–211)

**Trajan**  
(98–117)

**Marcus Aurelius**  
(161–180)





● **Theme:** The church and the day of the Lord

● **Key verses:**

<sup>1</sup> Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)

# The 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Thessalonians

## Encouragement in Suffering (Chapter 1)

- Praise—1:1–4
- Promise—1:5–10
- Prayer—1:11–12

## The Order of Events (Chapter 2)

- How the man of sin appears—2:1–7
- How the Son of God appears—2:8–12
- How a child of God should live—2:13–7

## The Coming Challenge (Chapters 3)

- Obey the Word—3:1–6
- Follow our example—3:7–9
- Discipline the unruly—3:10–15

## 2 Thessalonians Chapter 1 ... introduction.

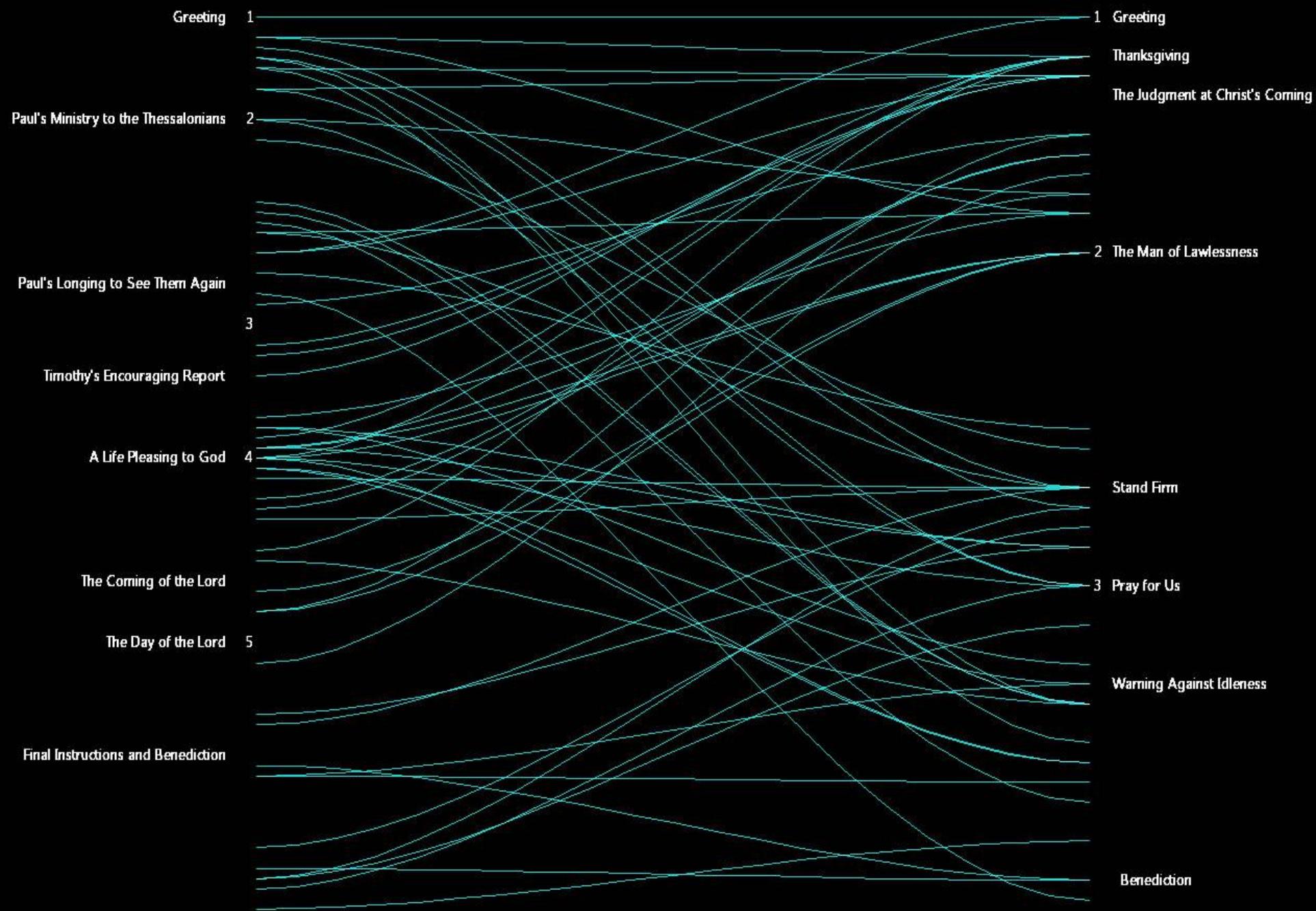


Chapter 2 of  
2 Thessalonians forms the heart  
of the epistle. Paul wrote to deal with an  
erroneous belief that Roman persecution  
signalled the start of the Day of the Lord.  
Two key issues are identity of  
(1) the "Restrainer" and  
(2) the "Man of  
Sin".

2 Thessalonians Chapter 3 ... conclusion.

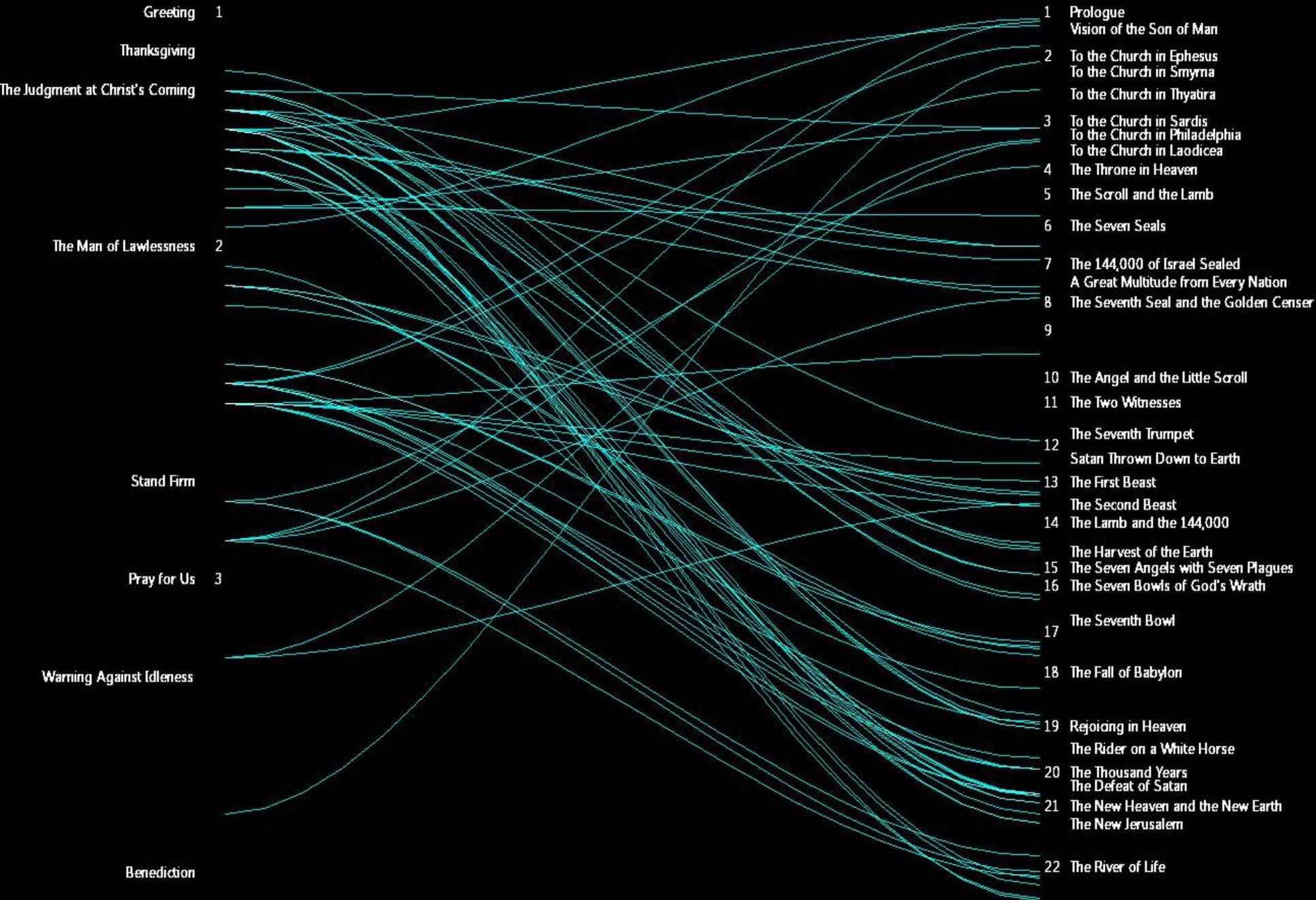
# 2 Thessalonians

# 1 Thessalonians



# 2 Thessalonians

# Revelation



## Key Points

Paul corrects the assumption of some believers that Christ has already returned

Christ's coming will be preceded by the arrival of the Antichrist

Keep away from lazy, disruptive and liars who claim to be Christian but who don't follow Christ

God calls on believers,  
His chosen ones,  
to stand firm until Christ's return.



# God's Final Judgment and Glory

- <sup>3</sup> We are bound [paying a debt] to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

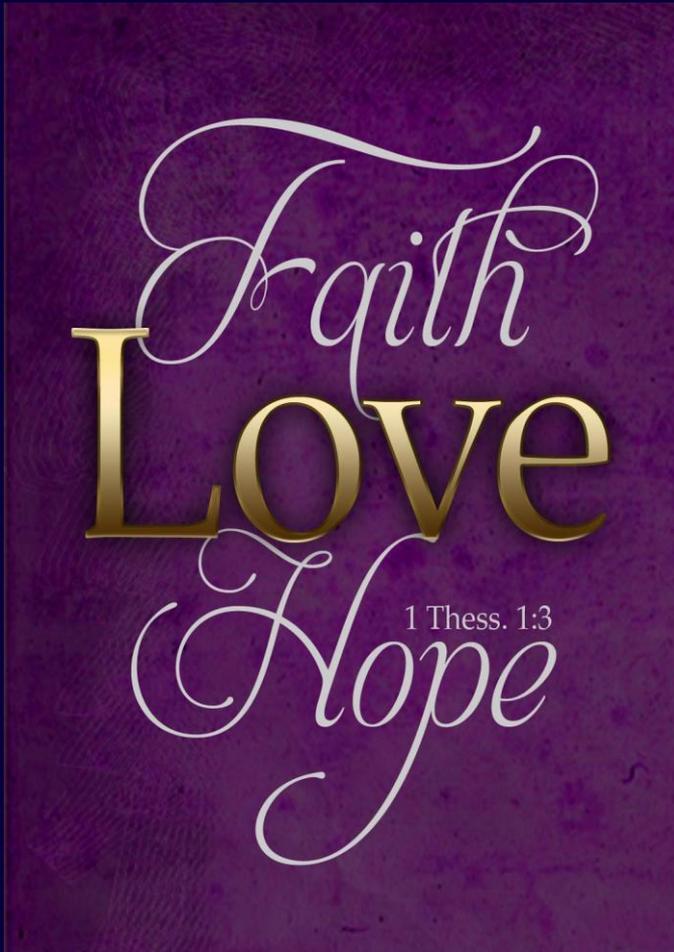
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What is **missing**?

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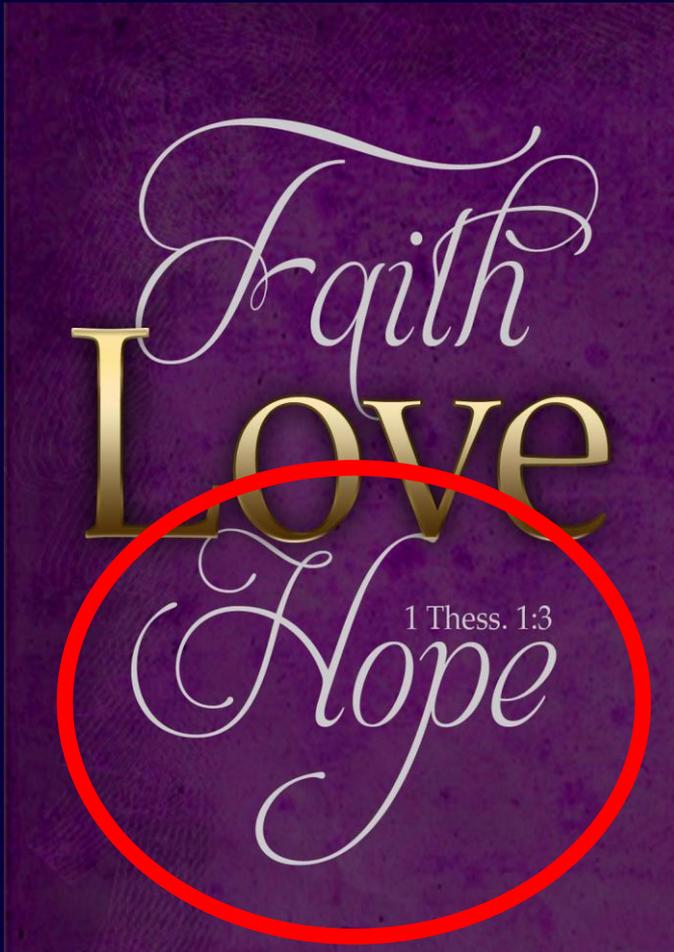
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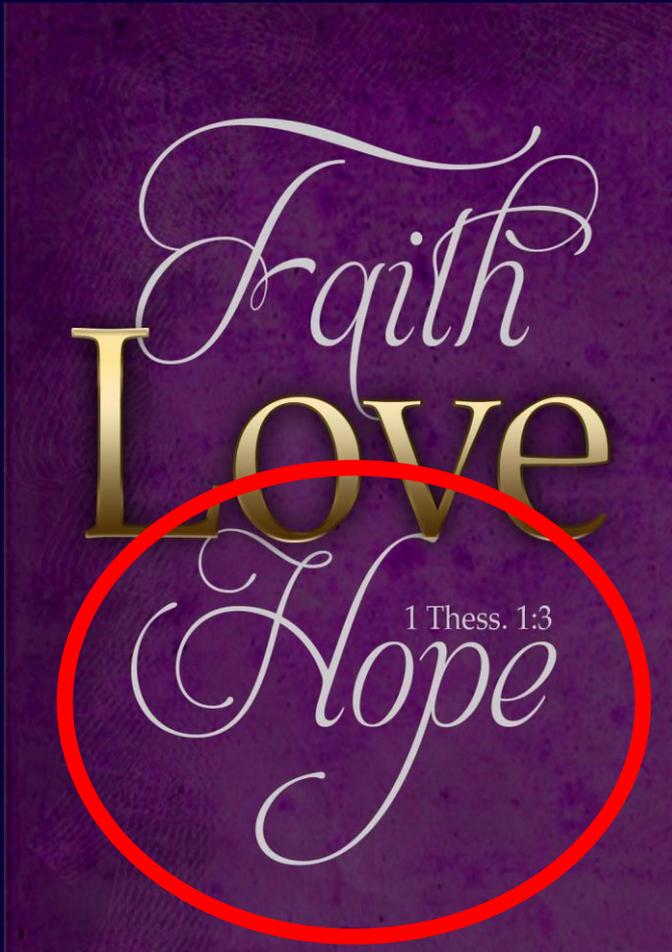
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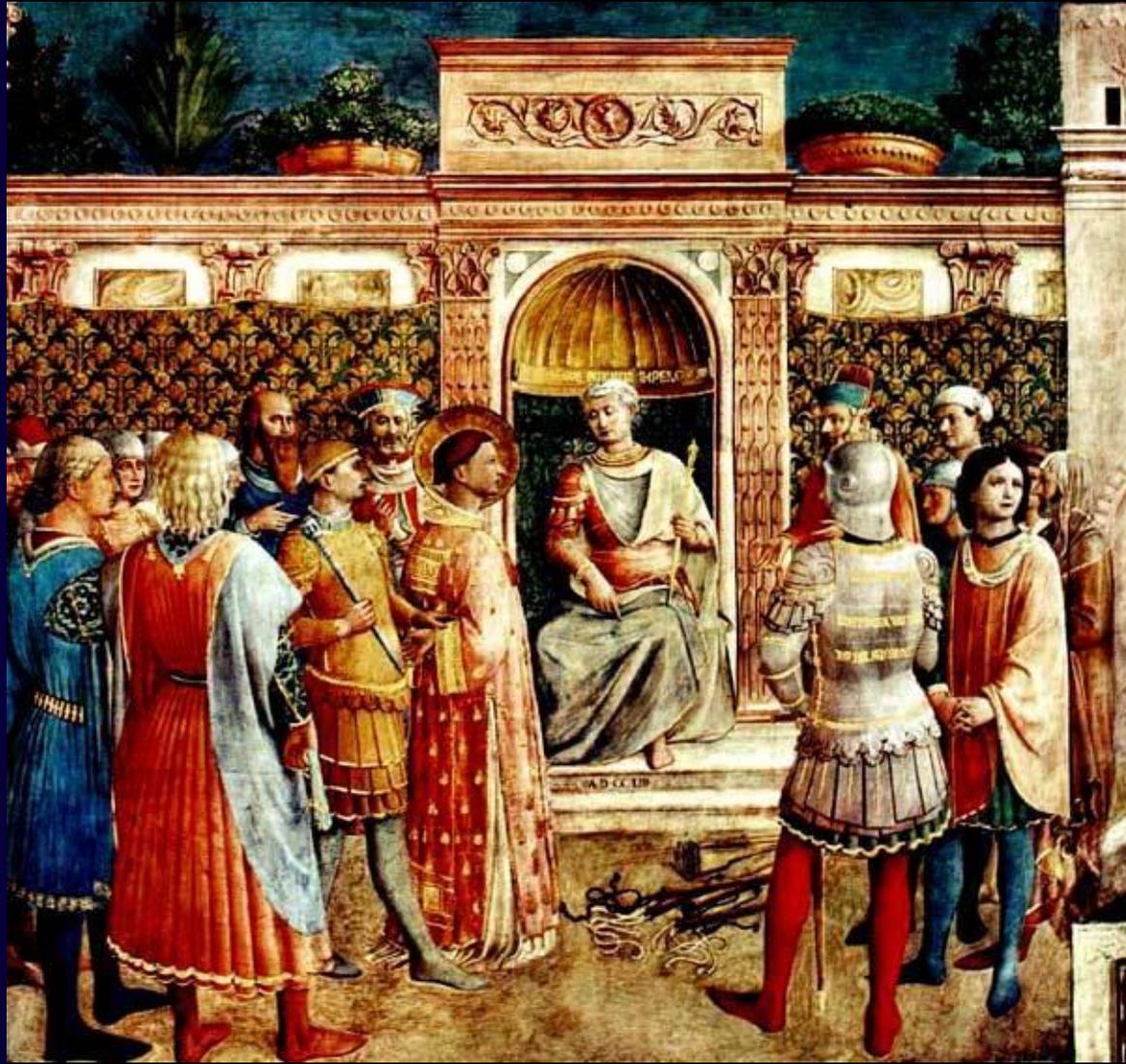
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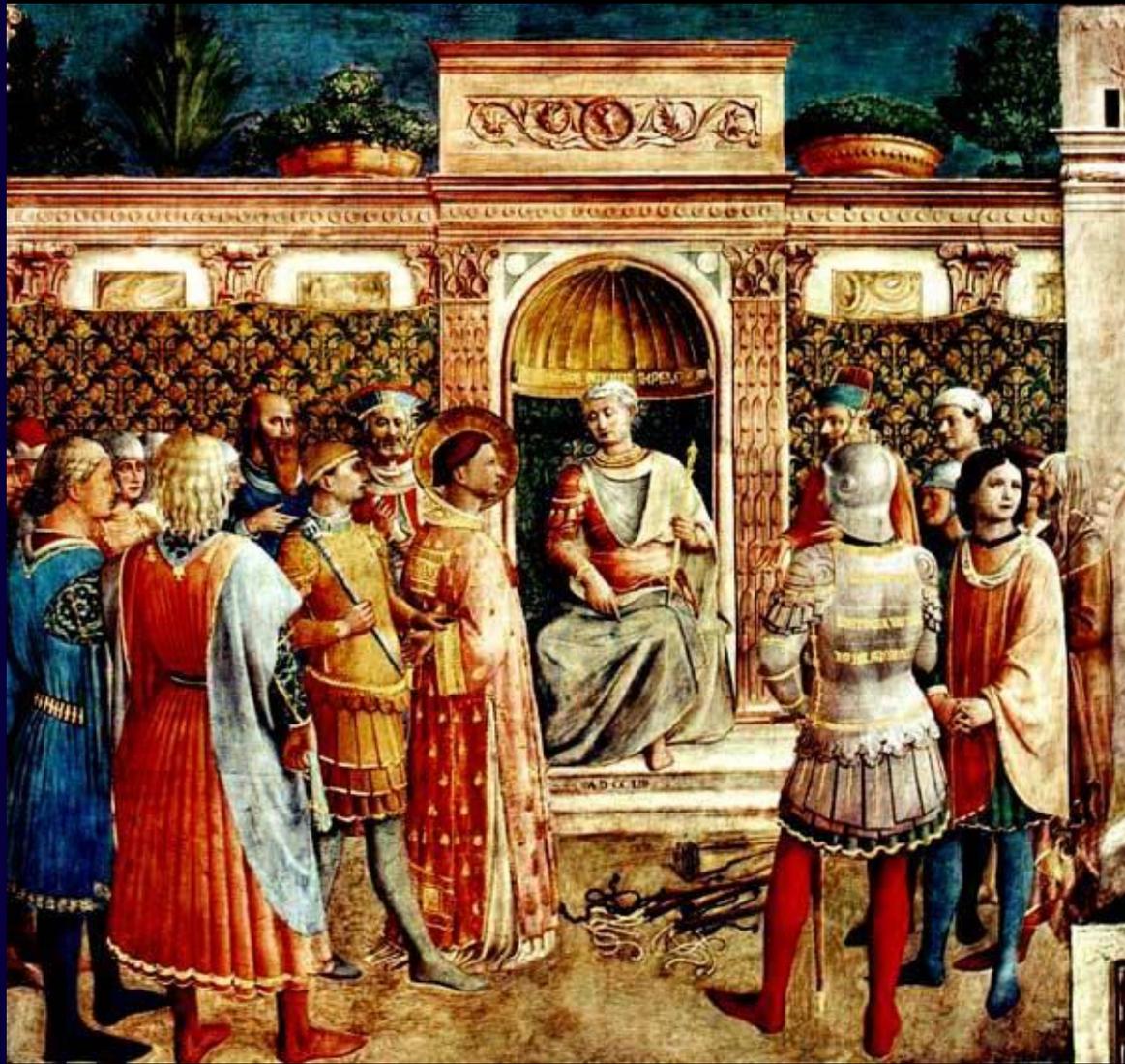
Hope

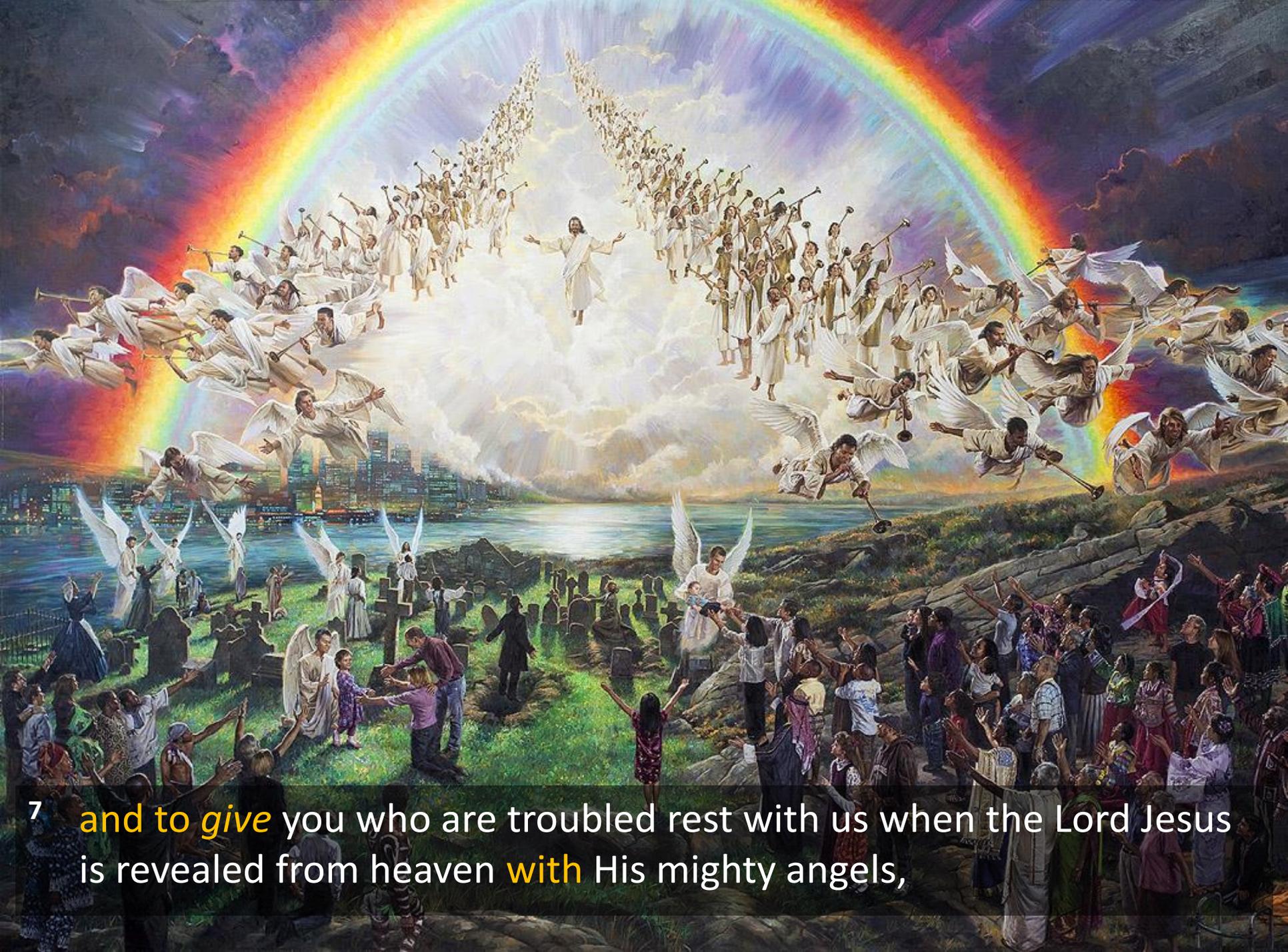
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4 **so that** we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

5 **which is** manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;  
6 **since it is** a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,





<sup>7</sup> **and to give** you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven **with** His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God,  
and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
<sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the  
presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

HELL



8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
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# THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

REVELATION 20:11-15

<sup>10</sup> when He comes, in **that Day**, to be glorified **in** His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

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# THE DAY OF THE LORD

The traditional Jewish expression for the day when God will intervene in history to destroy His enemies and establish His Kingdom.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi

# THE DAY OF THE LORD

<sup>11</sup> Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, <sup>12</sup> that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Introduction over, let's examine Chapter 2,



Chapter 2 of  
2 Thessalonians forms the heart  
of the epistle. Paul wrote to deal with an  
erroneous belief that Roman persecution  
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the **heart** of Second Thessalonians.

## 2 Thessalonians 2

### The Great Apostasy

<sup>1</sup> Now, brethren, concerning the coming [*parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ **and** our gathering [*episunagoge*] together to Him, we ask you,



By placing the Lord's "coming" and "gathering" in the same sentence, Paul is summarising 1 Thessalonians 4:17-19.

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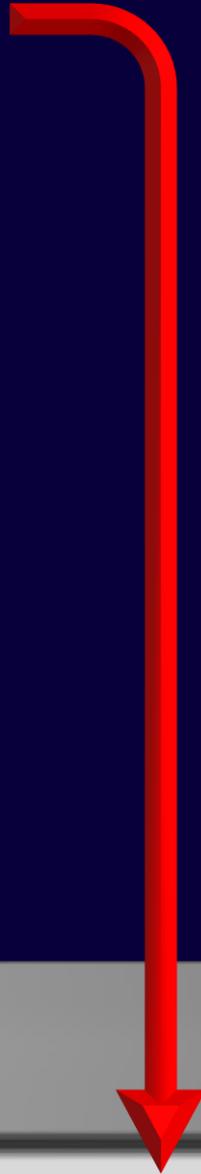
<sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, **as if from us**<sup>\*</sup>, as though the day of Christ<sup>\*\*</sup> had come.

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<sup>\*</sup> A counterfeit or forged letter circulated claiming that the new Roman persecution meant that the Day of the LORD had come, shaking the Thessalonians.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Some translations use the Greek Χριστοῦ (*Christos*, or Christ) and others κυρίου (*kyrios*, or Lord).

<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day* [the Day of the Lord] *will not come unless*



**Prerequisites** for the Day of the Lord (Second Coming)

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- the falling away comes first,

The apostasy  
**occurs**

1

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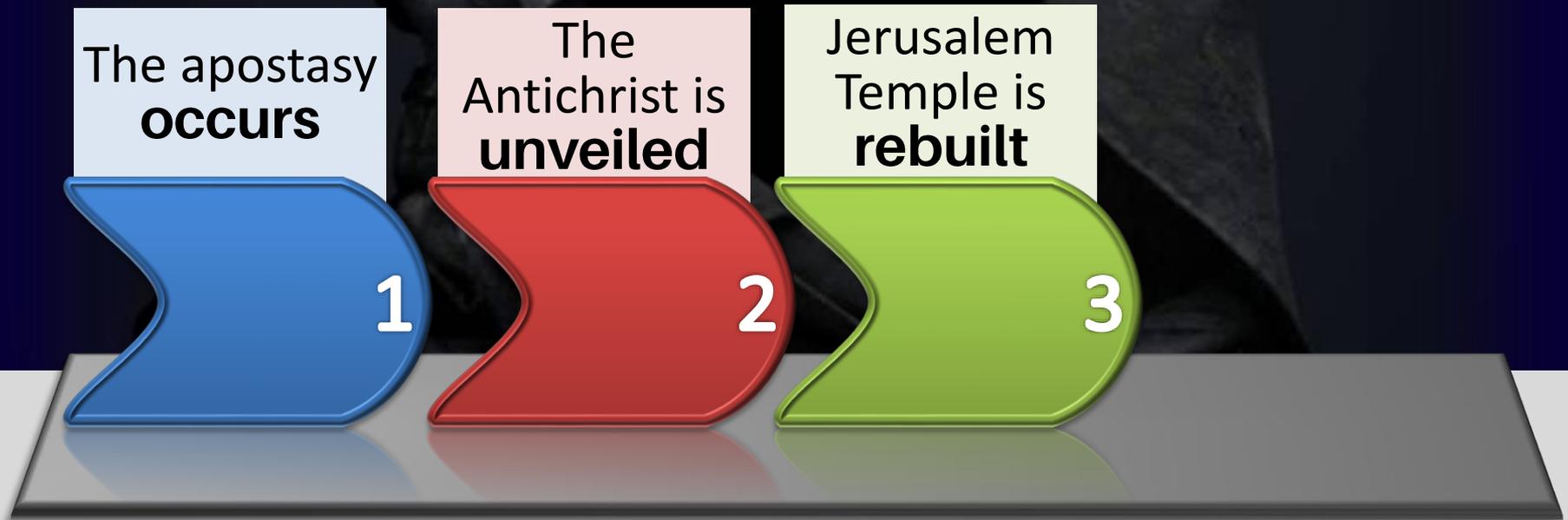
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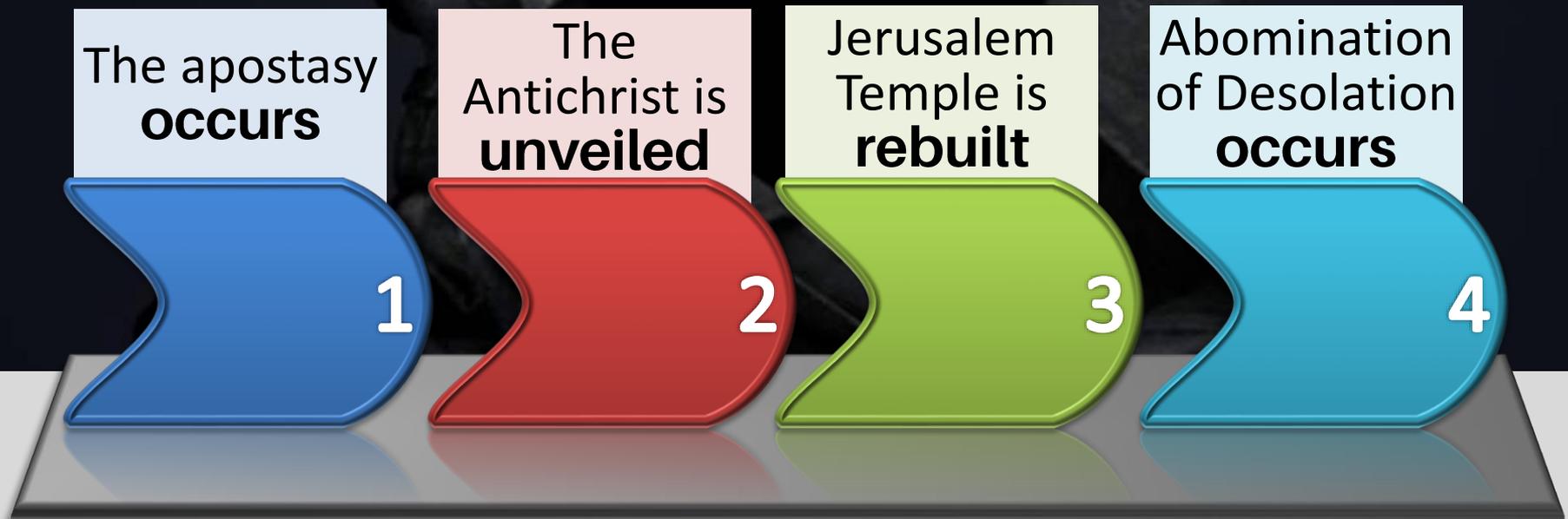
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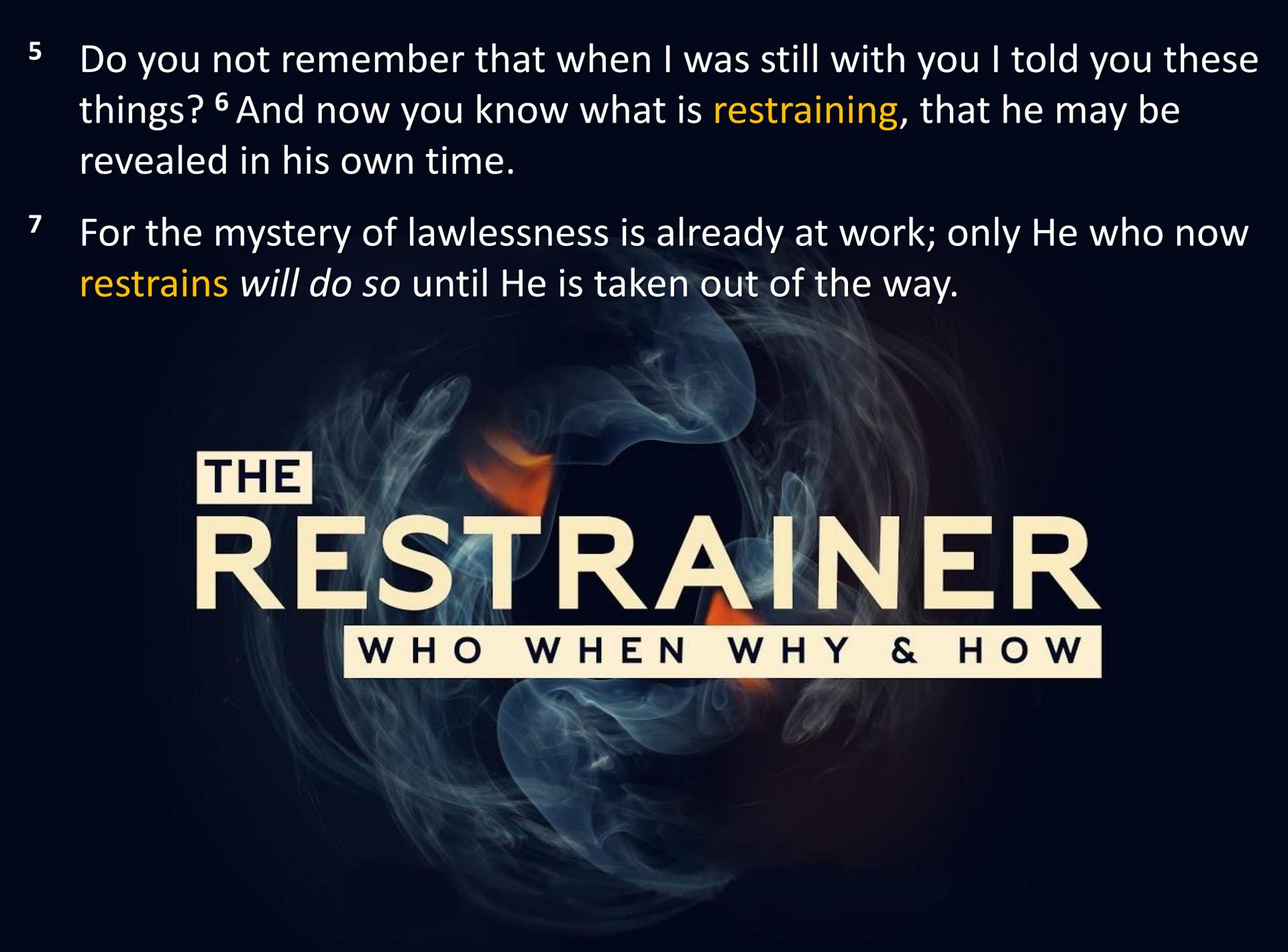


**Prerequisites for the Day of the Lord (Second Coming)**

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**THE**  
**RESTRAINER**  
**WHO WHEN WHY & HOW**

# THE RESTRAINER

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- The Restrainer is powerful enough to suppress the spiritual powers of darkness seeking to promote the man of sin.
- The restraint is global.



**THE**  
**RESTRAINER**

**WHO WHEN WHY & HOW**

**Supernatural**

**Natural**



# THE RESTRAINER

WHO WHEN WHY & HOW

## Supernatural

## Natural

- The Roman Empire (27BC-1453)
- The Temple (ended AD70)
- The United Nations (1945-?)
- The Roman Catholic Church (4<sup>th</sup> century AD-present)
- Human government
- The preaching of the Gospel

# THE RESTRAINER

WHO WHEN WHY & HOW

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- A hostile force:
  - Satan (or his binding)
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# THE RESTRAINER

WHO WHEN WHY & HOW

## Supernatural

- A hostile force:
  - Satan (or his binding)
  - Human government
- A benevolent force:
  - God Himself
  - Archangels Michael/Gabriel
  - The Bible
  - A mythological being

## Natural

- The Roman Empire (27BC-1453)
- The Temple (ended AD70)
- The United Nations (1945-?)
- The Roman Catholic Church (4<sup>th</sup> century AD-present)
- Human government
- The preaching of the Gospel

# The Restrainer

## • Only God has ever restrained sin:

- “And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh” (Gen 6:3).

- God’s hedge in Job 1 And 2 restrained Satan.

## • At Pentecost, the **Holy Spirit** came to abide with believers **forever**.

- “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

- “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19)

- “When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will restrain ....” (Isaiah 59:19)

- ∴ The Holy Spirit will not leave living believers behind on earth.



## REVISION

- <sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup> And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.
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## REVISION

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## CONTINUING

- <sup>8</sup> 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.



<sup>9</sup> The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, <sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

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<sup>11</sup> And for this reason

God will send them strong delusion,  
that they should believe the lie,

<sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned

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

<sup>18</sup> For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> **Professing to be wise, they became fools,** <sup>23</sup> **and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man**—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup> **Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness**, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup> **For this reason God gave them up to vile passions.** For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup> Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, **God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;** <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> **who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.**

(Romans 1:18-28)

# LGBTQQICAAAPPF2K+

L – lesbian

G – gay

B – bisexual

T – transgender

Q – queer

Q – questioning

I – intersex

C – curious

A – asexual

A – agender

A – ally

P – pansexual

P – polysexual

F – friends and family

2 – two-spirit

K – kink

+ – any preference missed

# Stand Fast

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## Stand Fast

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*chose you* FOR  
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*2 Thessalonians 2:13*

## Stand Fast

- <sup>13</sup> But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
- <sup>14</sup> to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**GOD**  
FROM THE **BEGINNING**  
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*2 Thessalonians 2:13*

<sup>15</sup> Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

THEREFORE, MY DEAR FRIENDS,

**STAND FIRM.**

2 THESSALONIANS 2:15



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2 THESSALONIANS 2:15

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

## This completes Chapter 2,

Chapter 2 of  
2 Thessalonians forms the heart  
of the epistle. Paul wrote to deal with an  
erroneous belief that Roman persecution  
signalled the start of the Day of the Lord.  
Two key issues are identity of  
(1) the "Restrainer" and  
(2) the "Man of  
Sin".

the **heart** of Paul's Second Thessalonian Letter.

## Review

### 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

# PRECONDITIONS FOR THE SECOND COMING

<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

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*That Day will not  
come unless*

**1**

The falling away (Apostasy) occurs.

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*That Day will not  
come unless*

**1**

The falling away (Apostasy) occurs.

The Body of Christ is  
complete and the  
Restrainer removed.

**2**

<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

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The Temple reconstruction is  
complete. The Temple is built.

4

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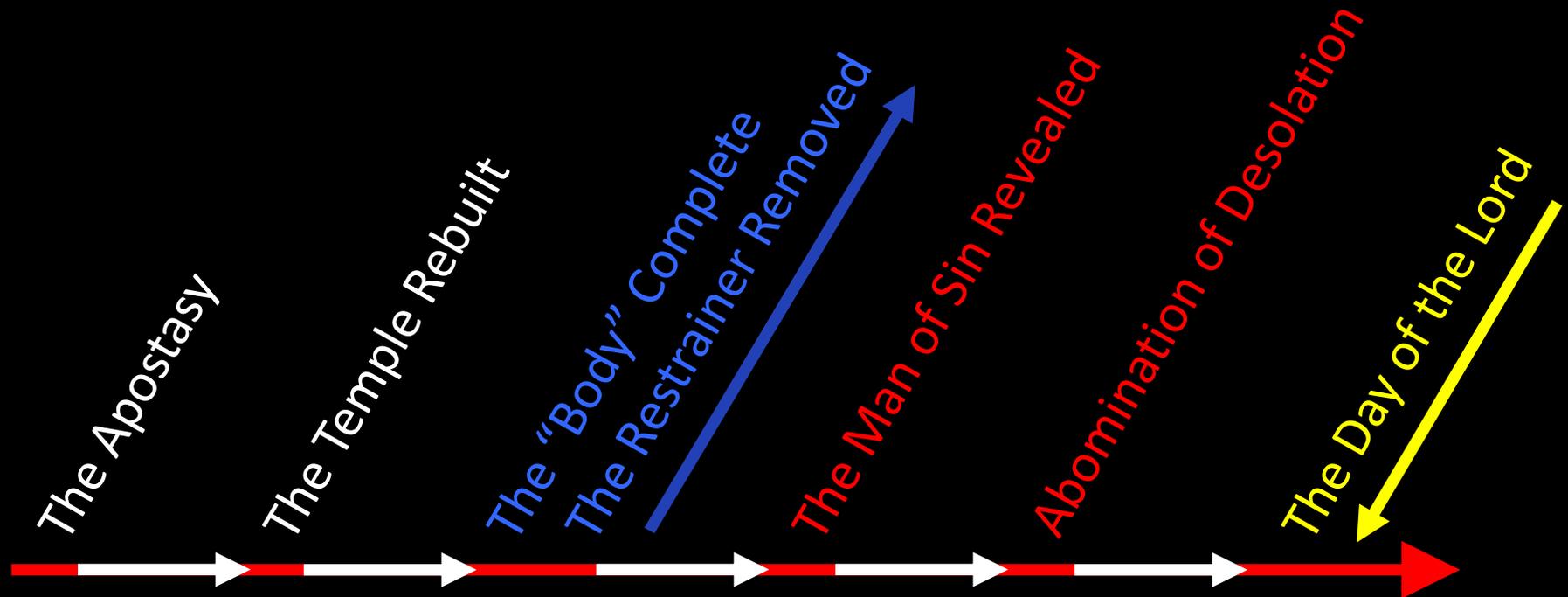
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6

The Day of the Lord  
arrives.

# Precedent Events to the Second Coming

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<sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

## The heart in Chapter 2 completed,

Chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians forms the heart of the epistle. Paul wrote to deal with an erroneous belief that Roman persecution signalled the start of the Day of the Lord. Two key issues are identity of (1) the "Restrainer" and (2) the "Man of Sin".

**Paul concludes and closes the letter.**

## 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3

**Pray and Be  
Patient**  
(3:1–5)

1

**Work If You  
Want to Eat**  
(3:6–13)

2

**Be Doers not  
just Hearers**  
(3:14–18)

3

**Three Practical  
Admonitions**

## 2 Thessalonians 3

### Pray and Be Patient

<sup>1</sup> Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, <sup>2</sup>



## 2 Thessalonians 3

### Pray and Be Patient

<sup>1</sup> Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, <sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.



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<sup>3</sup> But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. <sup>4</sup> And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

## 2 Thessalonians 3

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<sup>5</sup> Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

## Work if You Want to Eat

- 6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

## Work if You Want to Eat

- <sup>6</sup> But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.
- <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, <sup>9</sup> not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

## Work if You Want to Eat

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- <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA, c. 1923



11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

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## **Pauline Wordplay**

**Busybodies are too busy to be busy!**

**I'm too busy minding your business  
to do any of my own!**

**I'm so busy doing nothing that  
I have no time to do anything else!**

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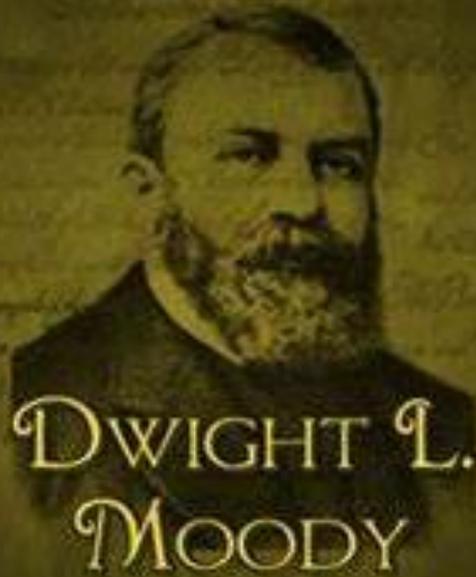
**I'm too busy minding your business  
to do any of my own!**

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I have no time to do anything else!**

**12** Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

## Be Doers not just Hearers

<sup>13</sup> But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.



"I get weary *in* the work, but not weary *of* the work."

NEVER  
GROW  
TIRED  
of doing  
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2 thessalonians 3:13

## Be Doers not just Hearers

- <sup>13</sup> But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.
- <sup>14</sup> And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.
- <sup>15</sup> Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

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The aim is **not**  
**exclusion** but  
**reformation.**

NEVER  
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2 thessalonians 3:13

## Benediction

<sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace  
Himself give you peace always  
in every way. The Lord *be* with  
you all.



Now may the  
**LORD**  
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himself  
Give You Peace  
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2 THESSALONIANS 3:16

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- <sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.
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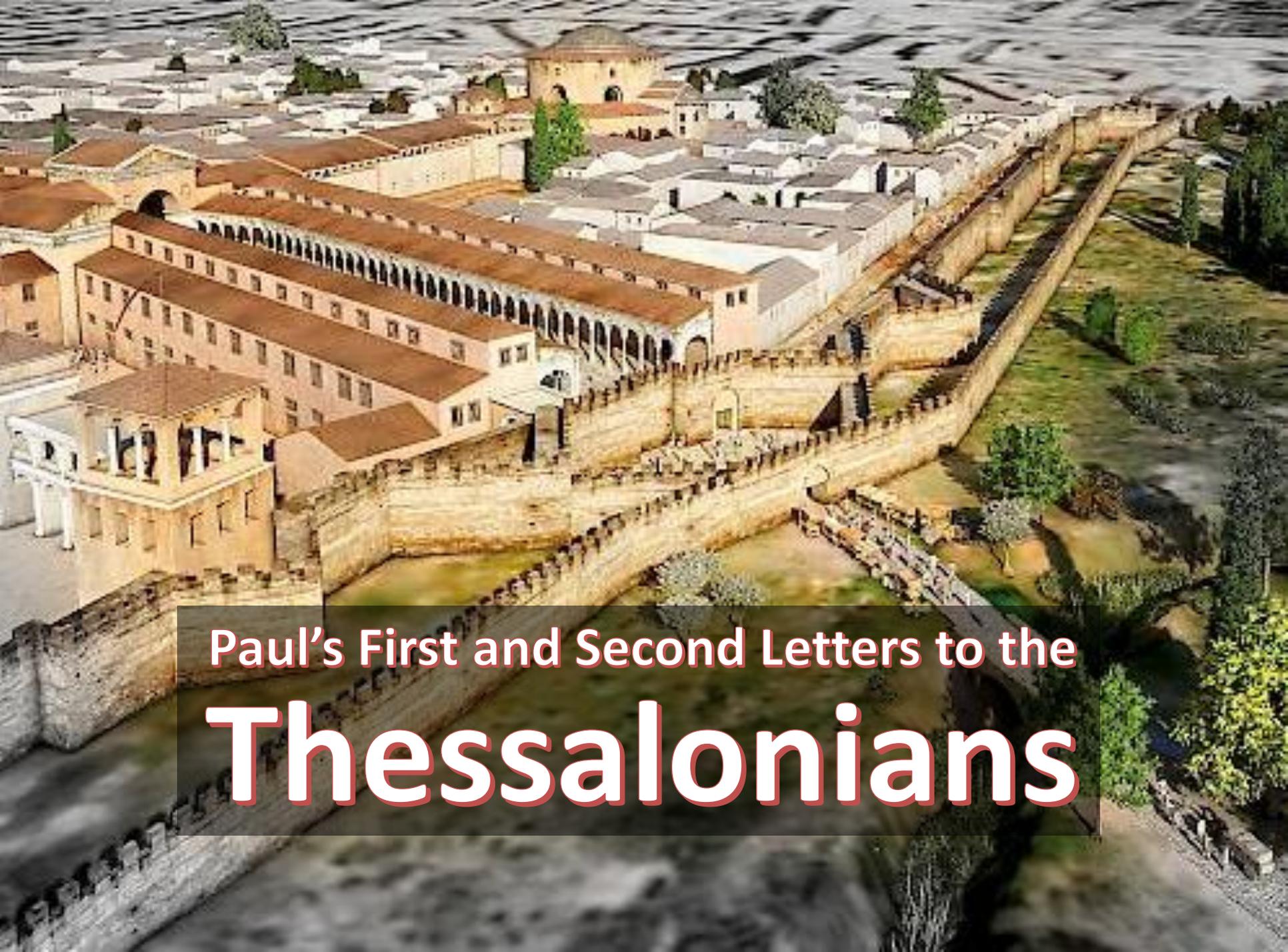
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*Grow* in the  
grace and  
knowledge of *Jesus*  
2 Peter 3:18



Now may the  
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2 THESSALONIANS 3:16

An aerial view of an ancient city, likely Thessalonica, showing a large, walled enclosure. The wall is made of stone and has a crenelated top. Inside the wall, there are several large, multi-story buildings with red-tiled roofs. One prominent building has a colonnade of columns. The city is surrounded by a river or a body of water, and there are trees and greenery in the foreground and background.

Paul's First and Second Letters to the  
**Thessalonians**