

II Thessalonians 2:1-2 The Correction Concerning the Day of the Lord Part 1

We are in II Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 1 through 5.

II Thessalonians chapter 1 was the instruction concerning afflictions. Chapter 2 we study the instruction concerning The Day of the Lord. We are using the term *tribulation period* that comes from our understanding and studies from the book of Revelation. But in the Bible the Biblical terminology for the seven-year judgment period by God is called *The Day of the Lord*. Not, *The Day of Christ*, we will see that in just a moment, but *The Day of the Lord*.

So in chapter 2 he is now going to turn to the instruction concerning The Day of the Lord. As I said before, we are in verses 1 to 5. But verses 1 to 5 is actually an introductory section to verses 1 through 12. Verses 1 through 12 is all one section in the Greek text. But we are taking verses 1 to 5 and we will probably spend two weeks just on these five verses. We have a very definite heavy study next week on apostasy, and apostasy in our day, and what does the Bible say about it. That will be next week.

The first letter he wrote because of their questions about the coming of the Lord. And specifically, not about His coming - whether He is coming or not, but rather about those who have died, where do they fit in? So he wrote his first letter. So Paul ministered about those who have died in Christ and about the coming of the Lord.

In his second letter, which we are in, he wrote within probably between a few months to a year after the first letter. It had to do with The Day of the Lord or the tribulation period, the time of judgment. Paul is using the term Day of the Lord to represent this tribulation period.

Now according to our text today in verse 2 of chapter 2, apparently some had come in and either showed the people a letter or said that they had seen a letter that was written by Paul saying that they were in the tribulation period, The Day of the Lord. That the Christians in Thessalonica were actually suffering as part of this judgment of God.

Paul is going to refute that, and he is going to make correction concerning their understanding and perception about the Day of the Lord. The false teaching part of it, and his concern for them that they are soon shaken from the truth even after Paul ministered to them himself. So not only the false teaching but the false doctrine itself. Then God is providing His grace for them. Then in their trials that God is actually proving them, that is, causing them to grow through trials. And that thirdly, the trials are to be a pattern, and the purpose of it all is to be an example to others, and a pattern and an encouragement to others.

So in chapter 1 God promises His judgment will be upon those nonbelievers who are causing trouble and affliction for those of His people. But the promise for His people is that we are going to be glorified in Him. That we are going to rule and reign with Him. And one day the trials and the afflictions are going to be over. That is the promise for us.

Now, if you can see the whole overall picture of chapter 1 - is the fact that God is saying that there are those who are troubling you, that the Lord is in charge of the whole situation. He is allowing that to happen to cause you to grow. The reason He is allowing it to happen is because He is saying these people cannot hurt you. They can cause you trouble and affliction, but they cannot hurt you. So whatever is allowed to happen to us is being overseen by God, and He is the overseer of the whole situation.

Remember when we studied the life of David from the Old Testament, he was on the run for many years as Saul pursued him. David was God's anointed, and Saul was going to kill him, and keep him from taking the throne. But he ran for many years before he sat on the throne as king to represent God. It is almost as if God were saying he had to learn how to be on the run, and what it is like not to be comfortable, and to be put out in the wild and learn how to lead a motley group of people because they were all criminals. So when David was on the run, he found himself mixed with another group of people who were also on the run, but they were on the run because they were criminals. So David had to gather this group of criminals together, this motley crew, and learn to lead them while on the run. They were not the elite soldiers, you know. And David had to learn how to be a leader with those kinds of people. So, if you can make it through the wilderness, survival. And he can learn how to make war on the run, if he can learn how to lead a rough group of people, then when he sits on the throne, he will be ready. He will be able to handle anything. It is God's training preparing him to be king.

So it was with Joseph in the Old Testament. You remember Joseph had a dream, and he shared the dream with his brothers. And the dream had to do with his brothers and father and the nation bowing down and worshiping him. And so it made his brothers angry, so they threw him into a pit. And then sold him to some merchants who were on their way to Egypt and they took him to Egypt. And he spent his time as a slave, eventually winding up in the prison for something he did not do. And seemingly God was not paying attention to helping Joseph to get him out of the jam. And you remember when there was a famine in the land, in the land of Egypt. Remember Joseph eventually was called out of prison and Pharaoh was told that that he could interpret dreams. So when he interpreted the dream, the Pharaoh put him in second in charge of the country. And there became a famine in the land and Joseph's father sent his sons, the same ones that sold Joseph into slavery. When they came before him, that is, Joseph and they did not recognize him; and he eventually revealed himself to them, they were afraid. They thought for sure that Joseph was dead by now, if not a slave, but not second in charge and the one they had to face in Egypt.

And Joseph said to them, **Do not fear, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.** One of the great texts in the Bible, **You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.** Whatever happens to us. Whatever trials, whatever hardships we go through, whatever difficulties. In the human it is considered bad, hard, difficult. But God considers it good because it is causing growth. It is causing to learn to trust the Lord for who He is. Psalm 46:10, one of my favorite verses, **Be still and know that I am God.** Be still and just know that He is God. He will take care of it. And if He does not, He will eventually work it out for the good.

So when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, it is like they thought he was dead or long gone and that is a long time and Joseph said to them, **Do not fear, you meant it for evil,**

but God meant it for good. Interesting. Though they treated him with evil, it was a very evil thing that they did, God allowed it. God was the overseer of the whole situation, and He worked it out for His good, when other people meant it for evil. He, that is Joseph, had to be humbled. He had to be brought low. It is almost as if God was saying to him, "You have to learn what it is like to live in prison, and to be humbled, and to become a servant, before I can uplift you to the position that I have for you," much like the life of David, so it was with Joseph.

So that is why Paul says in Romans chapter 8 verse 28, **For God works all things for the good to those that love Him and are called according to His purpose.** He did not say *all things are good*. Because whatever evil intentions they mean for you God is going to work it out for His good, for His benefit. That is the only reason He allows it, the end result. But the text does not say *all things are good*, but He works it out for the result of good.

So again we go back to that statement I made a couple weeks ago that the Holy Spirit keeps challenging me with, is the grace of the Lord sufficient? That is the question every situation makes to us. The challenge to us, the finger points at us and says, is the Lord and His grace sufficient? That is the only thing we have to answer. If His grace is sufficient, problem solved. The circumstance does not have to clear up. The circumstance does not have to change. The question is, is the Lord's grace sufficient? In all my complaint, and all of my struggle, and in all of my hardship of life the real question is put to me, is the Lord sufficient? Is the sufficiency of Christ sufficient or not? No matter whether people treat me with evil or with good, is the sufficiency of Christ enough? Will He keep me? That is what every situation asks us.

Again, from II Corinthians chapter 12 verse 9 where God said to Paul, **My grace is sufficient for you.** No matter what physical hardship, no matter what circumstances of hardship, no matter how people treat us, is the sufficiency of Christ enough? That is the question that the situation is making to us. Can we trust Him for all of His sufficiency? That is the thing that we are learning.

Well, in II Thessalonians Paul was saying to them that they were a pattern, an example for all those in the other churches, what they are going through with their trials. Because they are growing in faith in their trials. They were growing in their love towards one another and their faith towards the Lord. And they considered the grace of the Lord to be sufficient for all of their needs.

Now as we get into chapter 2, this is the correction concerning The Day of the Lord. Now the central theme of the book of The day of the Lord is verses 6 through 12. Actually, verses 1 to 12 is all one section, as I mentioned to you earlier. In the Greek text verses 1 through 5 is the introduction to the central theme, which is presented to us in verses 6 through 12.

First of all, in II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 1, you can see it in your study guide. **Now we ask you.** If you had the King James text where it says, "We ask you," *we ask you* is at the end of the verse. In the Greek text it is literally at the beginning of the verse. It literally reads, **Now we ask you, brothers.** That is how the text literally reads. He is asking them something concerning something and for a purpose. And so what he is asking them is about the subject

regarding the coming of the Lord and of our gathering together to Him. That is what verse 1 says. **Now we ask you, brothers, regarding the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him.**

Notice verse 2. It starts out with the word *for*. It is not in a lot of English translations, but it is in verse 2 in the Greek Text. It starts out with the word *for* showing the purpose, I am asking you for a purpose.

Jump down to verse 5 for a moment. Verse 5 says, **Do you not remember that still being with you, I was saying these things to you?** That is the correction and the ministry he is about to give to them. So whatever he is going to say between verses 1 and 5 about the coming of the Lord, and the gathering together to meet Him in the air, is in I Thessalonians chapter 4. Whatever that teaching was, he is saying, "Do you not remember that I was telling you these things? I said it in my letter. Now you have gotten off track." That is the whole point of verses 1 to 5. He is telling them they are shaken, they have been shaken by false teaching, rumors.

So the first point I want to point out to you is Paul's prior teaching. In I Thessalonians Paul has already instructed them, "When the Lord comes, we are going to meet Him in the air." And then he went into chapter 5 to say this was a surprise only to those who are nonbelievers. Believers get caught up in the air. The nonbelievers are surprised. And when the judgment comes nonbelievers are surprised. I Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 9, very important verse in the Bible. This is to say that when the day comes we are taken up, the reason we are taken up is because The Day of the Lord (or *the tribulation period*) is not a time for growth. It is not a trial. It is the judgment of God upon a nonbelieving world.

But he says, and here is the purpose for his writing, that is point number two. The prior teaching of Paul is point number one. Point number two is the purpose for which he is asking them. It says literally in verse 2 - I will read it to you literally from the Greek standpoint because the English text does not say it literally. But it literally says, **For you not to be quickly shaken from the mind.** Interesting. That is how it literally reads: **For you not to be quickly shaken from the mind.** I will get into that in just a moment.

The Greek text has the word *for* in front of verse 2, showing the purpose and to which he is asking them these questions. He says **For the purpose**, the reason I am asking you this, **I am making request of you regarding the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, our gathering together to Him, it is for the purpose for you not to be quickly shaken from the mind, or troubled.**

Now the term, the three words *from the mind*. I gave it to you literally. The word *mind* is not the word *psyche*. The Greek word is the word **νοῦς** (noos). In the word **νοῦς** (noos) in Greek - there are many different words in Greek that teach us about the function of the brain - the word **νοῦς** (noos) has to do with *the perception of the mind*. The perceptive abilities and processes of mind. The *psyche* is the brain itself, the mind itself. And in this case the **νοῦς** (noos) has to do with perception that has been gained through teaching. So one Greek word, you dig into the history of this word and study its use in other literature as well the Bible, you realize that Paul is saying, "I am concerned about you, that you are not quickly shaken from the

perception that you already had with Paul's teaching." He says, "Your perception has changed. You do not perceive the truth anymore. You are perceiving what the false teachers are teaching you." It is for not to be quickly shaken from the mind, nor to be troubled, he goes on to say. So he is saying quickly shaken from the perception that you gained from us - you are so quickly shaken from the perception. They were very troubled by this new teaching that they were going by.

Hold your place please, and turn with me to the book of Ephesians, if you have your Bibles. The book of Ephesians - about being shaken from the perception in accordance with Paul's teachings. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 7, **But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Therefore He says, "When He ascended on high, (that would be Christ) He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."** The captives are the sinners who were captive to sin. When Jesus ascended up on high and sent His Spirit to save people, He set the captives free. He led captivity captive. Now that is an interesting statement. It means He led to those who were captive to sin, to be captives of Christ.

Bob Dylan had a song many years ago, "Everybody's a slave to something." We think that by receiving Christ I am now free to do whatever I want to do. No. You are a slave to whatever you want to do.

So, **He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.** Now, right away you are probably thinking these are the **χάρισμα** (charisma) gifts He is giving to people, to these captives, but that is not what the Greek text says. The *gifts* in this particular text is not **χάρισμα** (charisma) of the Holy Spirit. This word is the word for the *men*. He actually took men and said, "You used to be prisoners and now you are my prisoner in the sense that your whole life is now going to be training the body of Christ." So the gifts that are given to men are the men themselves.

Notice what he is saying, verse 9, **Now that He ascended, what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?** Verse 10, **He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.** Verse 11, **And He Himself gave...**

Now we see in verse 11. All that from verse 9 and 10 was a parenthesis to explain the phrase *He ascended*. Verse 11 picks up where verse 8 leaves off. It says He gave gifts to men.

Verse 11, **And He Himself gave.** Here you are, here is the giving, here are the gifts. He names the gifts. **And He Himself gave some to be apostles.** He took men and made them apostles and gave them back to those as gifts given to men. Quoting now, in verse 11 again, **He made some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.** Four kinds of people. This last one, this *pastor and teacher* is all one person. A teacher doesn't necessarily need to be a pastor, but the pastor always needs to be a teacher. These four kinds of people God took out of the captives. Notice what is says in verse 12. The purpose for these men is, **For the equipping of the saints.** The word *equipping* is the Greek word **καταρτίζω** (katartizō).

In the Gospel of Mark in chapter 1 it is the word used for the disciples when they were called by the Lord while they were in the boat mending their nets. It is the word *mending*. The word *mending* is the word **καταρτίζω** (katartizō). It is a medical term that has to do with mending the broken bones. It is also used for mending fishing nets. It is not equipping, that is, teaching Christians how to go out and witness. That is not what *equipping* means. It means *to mend believers*. The reason the Lord has put these four ministries in the body of Christ is for the purpose of mending the saints. That is something that you really need to pay attention to and mark in your minds and hearts.

Secondly, after the saints are mended it is **For the work of ministry, for the building (or development) of the body of Christ**. There are a lot of people that just jump right in with a mystical ministry from the Lord and their life has not been mended. So you see the progression here. In Paul's teachings and in the Scriptures, it teaches that once you are saved your soul is saved and you belong to Christ totally, but all the damage that has been done by sin over the years has to be mended. Paul said in Romans chapter 12, **The renewing of the mind**. It has to be mended before a person can go out and function effectively with one of these four ministries. It is for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, so that people can be mended and turn around and be a ministry to others and a blessing to others, for the building up or development of the body of Christ.

Here is the goal, verse 13, **Until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man**. The word *perfect* means *mature*. **To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**: verse 14, **that we should no longer be children**. And you see that the difference here - you are talking about maturity, the goal the direction is to grow in maturity. **That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, and the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting**. So there is the in-depth view of what it means to be shaken. We should arrive at a point that we are no longer children tossed around, carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and the craftiness of deceitful plotting.

Verse 15, **By speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, even Christ**: verse 16, **from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its part, causes growth of the body for the building up of itself in love**.

You can see the pattern and the teaching is here. God has taken men and said, "You men are going to be gifts to the body of Christ. Your whole life is given to Christ and this one purpose." They used to be a slave to sin, but now they are enslaved to Christ. It is for the mending of the saints, so they can arrive at being able to serve so the body of Christ can effectively develop itself. Satan's trick is to come along with those who have not matured and through craftiness in a very genius system, very persuasive words, to take young immature Christians and toss them to and fro with every wind of doctrine. When a person has not been mended, this is the phase in which Satan comes in by the trickery of men with persuasive words. They are pulled away and they get into some of these other doctrines that is not only against the Scriptures, but is totally in the flesh like the Christians in Corinth were.

So what Paul was praying back in II Thessalonians, he said in Ephesians chapter 4 in a more detailed teaching way. Shaken, tossed to and fro, he says to them, the purpose for the writing is for them not to be quickly shaken from the perception or to be troubled.

The three ways in which they are shaken or troubled, which we see in our day - look at verse 2.

First of all, **Whether through spirit.** That is how it is literally translated. In other words, somebody comes along and they say, "Oh, does the word of God say that?" or "Did Paul say that? Well, God's Spirit told me something different and a different message. Well, God's Spirit told me this." Sorry. You might be convinced of that but when it goes against the word of God or does not bear witness in the person's heart, Paul says somebody will come along with this mystical thing that just God's Spirit told them. And when the word of God does not back it up, or contradicts anything Paul might have to say, remember what he said in Galatians chapter 1 verses 8 and 9. **If anybody presents to you another gospel than that which we have presented to you let him be accursed.** So somebody might come and say, "Through His Spirit speaking to them."

Secondly, **Or through word,** that is the literal translation. That is, *speech*. It is some kind of system of teaching. Somebody comes along and they will be speaking this and teaching this ingenious system of teaching that puts them away literally from the truth. But in reality, it goes against the truth of what the writer intended when he was teaching.

Thirdly, it also says, **Through a letter, as from us, as though the Day of the Lord has come.** So apparently there was a false letter circulated that said it was from Paul, and that Paul said that they were going through Day of the Lord, the tribulation period. He is basically saying, "How can you be so quickly shaken? Did I not just teach you? You are already off-track." And so he says the third way in which you can be troubled is through a letter as from us that the day of Christ has come. So apparently what they were believing, that is what they were pulled away from.

Now I will share with you about this little phrase *Day of Christ* in closing, at the end of verse 2. In the oldest manuscripts it says, **Day of the Lord.** Some English texts use *the Day of Christ*, but the old manuscripts do not say *Day of Christ*, it says *Day of the Lord*. Why is that important? It is because in Joel chapter 2 - as well as Peter's message in Acts chapter 2 when he quoted from Joel chapter 2 - it is called The Day of the Lord, which is the tribulation period. That is the day when the Lord has His way and brings judgment. So it is very important that you know that the word *Christ* in a lot of English texts - that the older manuscripts has the word *Lord*, not the word *Christ*. This is not trying to demean the word *Christ*, but The Day of the Lord is different than The Day of Christ. The Day of Christ is His second coming in the Bible. The Day of the Lord is a period of judgement represented by the seven years of tribulation that the book of Revelation presents to us, as well as Peter's message in Acts chapter 2.

So literally the Greek texts, the oldest manuscripts say *Day of the Lord* here. So, that is:

- 1) somebody through spirit. They say, "God told me," but it goes against the word, which is why a believer needs to know the word of God. If it goes against the Scriptures, it is to be rejected.
- 2) or through a system of teaching. People come out with their own systems. People stop studying the Bible and start studying other people's methods
- 3) or through a letter that supposedly came from Paul. And they said, "The Day of the Lord has arrived, has come." And Paul says, "No, the Day of the Lord has not come yet. I already taught you this and now you are shaken."

So we as believers need to understand that once we are saved, it does not mean we are mended. There has to be a renewing of the mind. The cortex of the brain has to be rewritten with the thoughts about God, and the truth of God; with bringing every thought into the captivity of Christ, so that we think Christ, and think the truths of Christ from God's word. So it is a concern.

Ministries today are not maturing the believers, not causing them to grow. It is entertainment. Feeding people stimulation. Telling them that the feeling that they feel in the stimulation is the moving of God's Spirit. But individually, people are not growing. They are not maturing. They do not know God's word. They do not know the difference between gospel teaching and false teaching. So that is why we spend so much time - week after week after week after year after year after year just going through the Scriptures, one verse at a time, one chapter at a time, one book at a time, allowing God's Spirit to rewrite the cortex of the brain and mend us, so that we can be capable of being used of the Lord to supply development to other Christians, as well as minister Christ to others who do not know Christ.

Let's close with prayer.