

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM (2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-5)

vv 1-3, see session 17

2 THESSALONIANS 2:4 – BLUE

- Two defining participles:
 - **Opposing**
 - **Exalting himself**
- **Opposition**
 - Paul gives no direct object; identity: “the one opposing.”
 - Broader biblical description of his opposition:
 - Opposition to God’s covenant people (**Daniel 7:21, 7:25; Revelation 12:13**)
 - Opposition to God’s laws and times (**Daniel 7:25**)
 - Opposition to all non-self-focused worship (**Revelation 13:4, 13:15**)
 - Opposition to resisting earthly powers (**Daniel 11:40–45**)
 - Opposition to truth itself (**2 Thessalonians 2:10–12**)
- **Self-exaltation**
 - Rises above every God-concept, not limited to the true God.
 - “All that is called God or worshipped.”
 - Supporting patterns:
 - Lucifer’s ascent language (**Isaiah 14:13–14**)
 - King magnifying himself above all gods (**Daniel 11:36–37**)
 - Beast’s blasphemies (**Revelation 13:5–6**)
- **Goal of his actions**
 - “Sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”
 - Requires a literal Jewish temple in Jerusalem.
 - Implies a future temple (third, or possibly fourth).
- **Implications**
 - The only true rival to “God” in human religious consciousness is the God of Scripture.
 - Antichrist enthrones himself only in Jerusalem:
 - Not Mecca
 - Not Salt Lake City
 - Not Lhasa
 - Not any other religious center
 - He targets the throne of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **Possible theological parallel**
 - Antichrist may function to Lucifer as Jesus functions to the Father:
 - A devil “in the flesh”
 - Full embodiment rather than mere possession
- **Judas as a prototype question**
 - **Arguments for:**
 - Shared title “son of perdition” (**John 17:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3**)
 - Satan directly entering Judas (**Luke 22:3, John 13:27**)
 - Zechariah’s worthless shepherd connected to thirty pieces of silver (**Zechariah 11**)
 - Judas called “a devil” (**John 6:70**)
 - Judas’s violent death resembles judgment on cosmic enemies (**Acts 1**, Psalms cited by Peter)
 - Parallels with the beast who “was, is not, and shall ascend” (**Revelation 17:8**)
 - **Arguments against:**
 - Incarnation is unique to Christ; Satan has no parallel incarnation
 - “Entered into him” matches possession, not incarnation (twice indicated)
 - “A devil” is idiomatic, not ontological
 - Zechariah’s shepherd does not require incarnation

- Judas's death and decay contradict any notion of Satanic embodiment
- Revelation 17 refers to a future ruler, not Judas
- Antichrist is empowered by Satan, not Satan incarnate (**Revelation 13:2**)
- Satan deceives; he never incarnates

2 THESSALONIANS 2:5 – BLUE

- Paul appeals to their memory of his prior teaching.
- Indicates he spoke extensively on apostasy, the man of sin, restraint, revelation, and the sequence of events.
- Acts 17 is the only recorded visit, but not a full record.
- Scripture gives a true but selective historical account.

THE WORK OF THE ANTICHRIST (VV. 6-12)

2 THESSALONIANS 2:6 – BLUE

- “What withholdeth” indicates a neuter restrainer.
- Grammar: **τὸ κατέχον** (neuter participle).
- Possible identifications:
 - **Holy Spirit** (neuter noun πνεῦμα)
 - **Body of Christ** (conceptually masculine, awkward with neuter grammar)
 - **Ecclesia** (feminine noun ἐκκλησία, poor grammatical fit)
 - **A place or realm such as the abyss** (neuter):
 - **Revelation 9:1–11** – locusts from the pit
 - **Revelation 11:7** – beast rises from the abyss
 - **Revelation 17:8** – beast ascends from the bottomless pit
 - **Luke 8:31** – demons beg not to be sent to the abyss
 - **2 Peter 2:4** – angels bound in chains
 - **Jude 6** – angels reserved in darkness
 - **Revelation 20** – Satan cast into the abyss
- “Revealed in his time” (passive verb)
 - Another permits or brings about his unveiling.
- “Withholdeth” is present active participle:
 - Continuous, ongoing action.
- Implication:
 - Antichrist is already a being, not a future baby.
 - Fits the concept of a spirit-realm entity being restrained by place, not person.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:7 – BLUE

- “Mystery of iniquity” already working.
 - Evil active now despite Antichrist being restrained.
 - Parallel: “many antichrists” already present (**1 John 2:18** implied)
- Masculine participle in v. 7:
 - **ὁ κατέχων** (masculine)
 - Cannot refer to the neuter restrainer of v. 6
 - Requires a personal masculine agent
- Same verb as v. 6: **κατέχω** (“to hold, restrain, control”)
 - v. 6: impersonal restraint holding back the man of sin
 - v. 7: personal agent controlling ongoing iniquity
- Two coexistences:
 - **Man of Sin withheld**
 - **Iniquity working through a personal agent**
 - Evil in general not restrained
 - Only the final figure is restrained

- “Until he be taken out of the way”
 - Passive verb
 - Means “removed from the midst”
 - Indicates forced removal, not voluntary withdrawal
- Identifying the masculine restrainer:
 - Not the church (feminine)
 - Not the Holy Spirit (neuter)
 - Body of Christ unlikely (no authority to “let”)
 - Only fitting personal being: **Satan**
 - Active in present iniquity
 - Explains why evil is rampant even without the Antichrist present
- When is Satan removed?
 - **Option 1:** Post-apostolic “age of silence”
 - Fits theological model but not text’s language of removal
 - **Option 2:** Revelation 12 removal
 - **Revelation 12:7–8** – Satan cast out of heaven by Michael
 - Loses access to heavenly realm
 - “No place found any more in heaven”
 - Immediately afterward:
 - **Revelation 13:1** – Beast rises
 - Removal is positional, not annihilation