

2Thessalonians 12-09-21b

Let's resume our study now in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. We pick up in verse 4, and this is where this passage gets very interesting. Not that the rest of it wasn't interesting, but it doesn't get any more interesting than this. Here's a question for you.

If Paul is writing to these poor beset persecuted Thessalonians, and he is writing to comfort and encourage them, why is he talking about stuff that they're not even going to see? And this, by the way, is one of the arguments for people to say, I don't think this is talking about rapture and believers leaving, because why does he go on to talk about the lawless man and all of these things that will happen after we're gone? Why would he be burdening the Thessalonians with this if they're not going to be here? Why do we need to know if we won't see it? Well, here's my suggestion for an answer. I mean, I could give you a second to think about it. Why would there be information about the Tribulation in the New Testament, which is ostensibly written to Christians of the church age? Why do we need to know this? Well, you could ask that about great portions of the book of the Revelation, which deals with the same period.

Chapters 5, chapters 4 through 19 doesn't really concern us either. And by the way, there are what, 39 books in the Old Testament that don't really concern us? I mean, Genesis is interesting to find out where everything came from, but how about the other 38 books? Why do I need to know all of that stuff? I didn't live in the old dusty days of the goat herds and the little shabby kings waving their staffs and slaughtering one another and Molech and rats and tumors and Philistines, and why do I need to know all that stuff? Well, we do need to know it, don't we? Because through God's intervention and God's active participation in the life of the nation of Israel, we learn things about him, don't we? It foreshadows the work of Christ. It elaborates in far greater detail than the New Testament does the nature of the work of Christ in securing our redemption and reconciliation and propitiation, atonement, sanctification, the need for the Holy Spirit, the weakness of the flesh, the ease with which we run amuck when we are faithless and apathetic and disinterested.

It's all illustrated and exemplified and amplified and zoomed in on and we've got close-ups and still photos and all kinds of elaboration of these things in the Old Testament. Well, guess what? The future is just as useful in God's mind for that as the past. We can learn from what God is going to do just as much as we learn from what God has done.

So this is the broad answer to that question, but it gets better than that. Let's look at this next verse. So you remember my expanded translation, if you will, and it's sort of a bit literal, trying to reflect the word order and trying to get at Paul's meaning and using these particular vocabulary terms, this particular construction.

There's a reason for it. The ideas hit us. Remember, Paul is a Hebrew of the Hebrews and he uses language even though this is in Greek, he's using language in a Hebraistic way.

Hebrews, and pretty much everybody in the ancient world, I think, but especially the Hebrews were interested in the order and the way in which successive ideas, successive word pictures, would hit the mind. Oratory, the sound and the way the sounds strike the ear and what it communicates. So we want to keep that in mind as we go through this.

Paul has labeled this paragraph and he says, now I'm going to talk to you about the coming of the Lord Jesus and our being gathered to Him. What did he tell him at first Thessalonians? Dead at Christ shall rise first. We who are alive and remain will be caught up together with Him in the clouds as caught up.

He's already said that. He remembers it. They remember it.

He doesn't have to repeat it. Now concerning that being caught away from the earth, no longer standing on the earth. Here's what we're talking about.

So now we're in verse 4 and he says, after saying, no one should deceive you. Don't be deceived. Don't let anyone deceive you by way of any machination, any turn, any new little devious mechanism, because except the departure, the standing away, the leaving of a previously standing group comes first and the man of no law, the man of no boundaries, the man of no constraint.

That's what a law is. A law is a constraint. It's a limitation.

You know, they always have these superheroes. You've got, you know, the Culligan man or the you know, Superman. You've got Spider-Man.

You've got Batman. You've got that stretchy man of the Fabulous Four or whatever they are. You've got the Incredible Hulk.

You know, they always have these powers. Well, what is it that distinguishes this man? He's unlimited man. He's unconstrained man.

That's really what this means. Anomia, unconstrained, no limits. So the man of no law has been revealed.

And remember the passive idea. God reveals him. He's revealed by God.

John has the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's the last book of the Bible. Well, this is the revelation of Antichrist.

And God reveals him just like he reveals Christ. And it's kind of an irony to me that this guy, for all of his strutting and fretting and you know, waving his arms and hands and his brief candle and hour on the stage, sound and fury, the only reason he can do that, the only reason he gets an hour on the stage is because God will draw back the curtain and allow it. That has to be

frustrating to Satan.

It has to be frustrating to the Antichrist. I think one of the reasons they get so mad is that they know the only reason they've got any ability to do anything is because God, it's by God's permission and they hate the whole notion of being dependent on God for anything and yet they can't get any elbow room, can't get any space without God pulling away the cover and allowing it. And so they're beholden to God.

They'll actually be saying, well, thank you God for this opportunity to give my speech. It's like this country allowing freedom of speech to its enemies. We allow Nazis to parade down Main Street.

We allow people to vilify and do all kinds of things and they're angry because deep in their heart they know the only reason they've got the freedom to demonstrate and do all these heinous things is because a country that was built on entirely different principles from theirs allows it, permits it, and it just frustrates the heck out of them. They'd rather it be the other way, that there was a country built on their principles and they could shut down and suppress all forms of speech that don't agree with them and it's an irony and a great burr under their saddle that the very principles they're against are the only principles that allow them to be against the principles in the first place. You can think about that.

The man of no law has been revealed, passive, the son of Apolia, the son of perdition, the son of destruction. By the way, the same term that was applied to Judas. The same word that is applied to wayward believers who are faithless.

And this is a bad place for a verse break. There should not be any break between verse 3 and 4 because in Greek he is in verse 3 it says he is ha anthropos teis anomias. He's the anthropoid lawless, right? That's one thing.

He is ha huias teis apolias. He's the son. So he's the man of lawlessness.

He's the son of perdition. Ha anthropos, ha huias. Now in verse 4 he has ha anti kamanos.

You already know from the first part of that word. He's anti something, right? Anti kamanos. And this is to pit yourself against a thing, to stand against it, to oppose it.

You direct yourself against another thing. Something has to be there for you to be this. You know, was a rebel without a cause, you know, what are you rebelling against? Well, what have you got? You know, give me something and I'll be against it.

That's anti kamanos. He's against, he opposes. He's just an opposer.

This is a participle, the menos ending. You've got anti at the beginning and menos at the end. And he is the one being against, basically.

He is the, you could translate this, opposer. But it's got that participle sense. It's an ongoing thing.

It's his identity. He is the one opposing, the one standing against, the one working against, the one undermining a thing. I'm against it.

This is like your atheists. They would have no name for themselves if there wasn't a god to be not believing in. You know, they have to take the word pheos as a part of their name.

And they hate god. They don't want anything to do with god, but they can't define themselves except in terms of being against god. And so they're stuck with it.

You know, they can't organize around anything except, well, whatever else you want to say, there is no god, and I hate him for it. So, opposing himself. And there's also, the menos here is also, not only is this participial, but it's a middle idea.

The middle idea is sort of, has a reflexive idea. He opposes himself. He puts himself against.

And he is hyper-airomenos. And once again, you've got the menos extension there that makes this a participle. And this is another middle.

So, elevating himself. Airos, aero, this is where we get aeroplane. It flies, it goes up.

Aero, aerodynamics. Aerodynamics are the dynamics of lift, of making something go up in the air. And the air itself comes from this word.

We call it air because it's up. It's above us. So, he is ha-anti-kemenos chi-hyper-airomenos.

He is the one opposing himself and exalting himself. This guy is directional. He pushes against things at his own level, and he's trying to elevate his level.

He's pushing out, and he's pushing up. He's wanting to go up. You know, hyper is where we get hyper, hyper-aero.

Hyper means, you know, too much of a thing. It's above the norm. If you're hyperactive, you're too much active.

Well, he wants to go up. He wants to be hyper-aero. He wants to lift himself up.

So, what is he now? He is a man of lawlessness. He is a son of perdition. He is the one opposing himself, putting himself against, and lifting himself up against all that is called God, is what you have in your translation here, I think.

But I translate this, opposing himself and exalting himself against. This is epi. This is the preposition epi, which means upon or against.

You have it a little bit different there. But it is, he opposes himself against and exalts himself against. And then you have an interesting phrase here.

Pas or pan, actually, which is pas, which means all. Pan means all or every. Pan ta legomenon.

You see that? Menon, again, which tells you that it's a participle and it's passive. So, everything that is called or everything that is named. Now, legomenon, this is the word that's used, Simon legomenon Petros.

Shimon legomenon Petros, Simon called Peter. So, he is opposing himself against and exalting himself above everything that is named, Simon named Peter. Everything that is called or referred to as God, that is thought of as God, that is called God.

This is not just the God in heaven, not just Elohim, the God of the Bible. This is anything God. This is Allah for the Muslims.

This is anything called God. Anything that stands in for God, any religious object of veneration, anything that people worship, and it's going to go on to say that he opposes himself against it and he lifts himself up above it, both. He wants to squash it and he wants to be dominant over it and superior to it, so that he can just squash it out of existence.

Now, look around today. What's happening in our society? There is active anomia. There is active rejection of constraint or restraint or morality.

We want to oppose anything that constitutes a restraint or a law against what we like and what we want, be it homosexual marriage or be it abortion or be it drug use or be it anything else. We oppose it and we rise above it. We elevate ourselves.

We look down upon it. We are derisive. We are condemning it.

We mock it. We shout it down. We push it off the stage and anybody that holds to it, we vilify and we jam.

We reject them. We make them a leper in society. Remember, this is happening now.

It's just the man that is going to embody it that has yet to be revealed. He'll be revealed when God pulls the cover off by removing those who currently stand in its way. When they're gathered to the Lord Jesus, this will be revealed in a man.

It will be personified. It will be embodied and led by the son of perdition, the man of anomia. He pits himself against and he elevates himself above.

And remember, he's just the embodiment. He's the culmination of something's been going on for a long time. Above all that is named or called or referred to as God, pheos or that is an object of

veneration.

This is sabasma in Greek. It's kind of a rare word, sabasma. And it means anything that is venerated, anything that is held in reverence.

It doesn't even have to be called God. Anything that is called God or anything that is revered, traditions, cultural values, that are cherished because, well, this is what my forefathers put in place. Anything that is revered, he wants to push it out of the way.

He wants to rise above it and take its place. No traditions, no venerated things from the past, nothing remotely related to God. If you want the standard for how things ought to be, you look to me.

So that, haste in Greek, he sits. This is an eris, active, infinitive. So as to sit as God.

Has pheos. He pushes it out of the way. He elevates himself above it.

Anything that looks like God is named God, anything that's venerated for the purpose of, so as to sit as God in the temple of God. You've got pheos three times in this sentence. He opposes himself against and rises above anything that is named God, so as to sit as God in the temple of God.

It's like Paul is creating an unholy trinity here. In three ways, he's replacing God. He opposes God.

He substitutes as God in the temple of God. Now, some people think this is the temple in Jerusalem and that the temple has to be standing, you know, based on this passage alone. I think the temple probably has to be standing, but not based on this passage.

This, I think, is the figurative temple. This is figurative. He opposes himself against anything that is called God, anything that is worshipped or venerated, so that he sits as God in the temple of God in the place where God would normally be found or be looked at.

I think this is the figurative temple. It's just me. If you want to take us a little over to the temple, God go with you.

I think it's figurative. You know, anybody heading for the temple, they're going to see this guy. Whatever their temple is, Buddhist temple, there's not going to be a six-armed fat guy.

It's going to be this guy. Anybody that's looking for answers, go to the internet, go to Wikipedia. It's not going to be the Wikipedia founder there asking you for a donation.

It's going to be this guy sitting there. I'll give you the answer. Whatever you consider the temple of God, the temple of wisdom, the temple of help and knowledge and support and assistance and comfort and encouragement, whatever it is, this guy wants to be it.

I want you dependent upon me. I've pushed everything else out of the way. I've elevated myself above it, and I've replaced it.

I am now your God. I am your benefactor. I am your provider.

I am your fount of wisdom. I am the be all and end all. Kind of reminds you of the five I wills.

I will elevate myself above the stars. I will be like the most high. This guy is the embodiment, but he's a man.

He is Anthropos. He is Huyas. So sits as God to sit.

This is his purpose. This is sort of an infinitive of purpose. So as to sit as God in the temple of God.

You have in your New King James, I think, showing himself that he is God. But it is oppo deiknumi, and this is a fourth use of theos. And this is to prove.

Deiknumi is the idea of a demonstration or a proof. It is based on evidence. You make a court case and you offer evidence.

You give a proof. You demonstrate that a thing is so. So proving himself that he is God, he's going to do things.

He's going to accomplish things to prove that he is God for all intents and purposes. He's the de facto God. There will be some lying wonders.

There will be some demonstrations. He'll pull rabbits out of hats. He'll cure diseases.

He'll stop wars. He will. People will say this guy is the second coming in principle.

Verse five. Now, this is a parenthesis. And in my Bible, I draw a parenthesis around the Paul.

This is a parenthetical remark. He says, Do you not remember that yet being with you these things I said to you? Think about the word order there. Do you not remember? Yet being with you these things I said to you.

Right in the middle of that sentence is the meat. You should remember this from what I said when I was there. You have forgotten.

You've forgotten. You're not. You've panicked.

You're not thinking about what you know. Do you ever go into a test and you know the material, but you blank, you clutch, you choke, you vapor lock, you know, headspace and timing gets off. You've got ammunition.

You just can't get it into the chamber and fire it. You're thinking, ah, I know this. I've studied this.

I know it. But under pressure, we forget. These people are under pressure.

And he says, look, I'm reminding you that I've already told you this stuff. And that's why he's being a little bit abbreviated. He's not spelling it all out.

He's saying, look, I'm giving you these hints. You ought to remember the whole thing now. And he's going to go on in verse six to say, and now that which holds back, that which contains, that which restrains, you have remembered.

It's a perfect tense. See, he says, let me sketch this out. The one that opposes himself, exalts himself against anything, substitutes himself for God, proves that he is God, sits in the temple of God.

Do you not remember that yet being with you, I said these things to you? And now that which restrains, contains, holds back, you have remembered. Now that I've given you this little prompt, now you have remembered, right? This is all kind of parenthetical. Now that which restrains, you have remembered.

He's confident in them. He says, I know you were just a little rattled, but now that I've given you this little bit of reminder, you know, sometimes the teacher will come by and have mercy on you and say, you know, think for a minute. You know, what formula did we talk about that solves this? And he said, oh, yeah, they haven't really told you anything.

They've just kind of nudged your memory. He's given them a nudge. Now that which holds back, you have remembered.

By the way, the word remember here, I think it's translated, they say, you know, what is, he's now, you know, what is restraining. Oida here, this word for knowledge is knowledge from seeing. And it's often used for remembering.

Now, you know, meaning now you remember, because you saw this before, you heard this before. Oida is knowledge from experience. Now you, now you remember.

And Oida is often translated remember. It's in the lexicon. Now you remember what is restraining.

With a view toward, this is ace, remember? Into, unto, with a view toward. Now, that which, the word order in Greek is, now that which holds back, you have remembered. With a view toward him to be revealed in his own kairos, his own season.

It's, it's not time. Kairos is a fitting season. The appropriate moment.

You got kairos and you get chronos. This is kairos. It's the, it's the season, you know, leaves fall

at the appropriate time.

Kairos, not a chronos. Oh, it's September 21st. It's the fall equinox, leaves drop.

No, it's, it's a season and it's the appropriate time for them to fall. Now, you know what is restraining. With a view toward him to be revealed in his own fitting season.

God has, and think about the import of this, God has assigned him a season. It's a fitting time for him to be the embodiment of all of this lawlessness that has gone on throughout human history. There's a fitting time and God is holding off that fitting time with a restraining element.

When that restraining element is removed, it's going to be according to God's timetable. God has chosen, and it's interesting, kairos, a fitting time. There is an appropriate fitting moment for the antichrist.

God has picked it. It's all in God's hands. Nothing happens without his control.

Nothing happens outside of his plan and purpose. And all of these struggling, rebellious, anarchical, sin of the high hand, frustrated, evil types have to wait for God's time. They can't get anything done until God takes the lid off and allows them a space.

A time, times and half a time, and then their time is up. And just got to frustrate the devil out of them. Almost literally.

With a view toward, now you know that which holds back. Now you remember. Because I told you when I was with you.

And the purpose, it is with a view toward him revealed in his fitting season. While you are here, it's not his fitting season and he's not going to show up. So don't let anybody fool you.

That brings us to verse 7 for the musterion. And once again, you've got that upsilon. That's a Y. That would be musterion.

We get the word mystery from this. What is a mystery? It's a hidden thing. And mystery has been so overused that I'm going to choose to translate this as hidden thing.

When you see musterion, just think hidden thing. It's a hidden thing. Mystery means kind of like, well, it's a mystery.

Nobody knows. A hidden thing, whoever hid it knows exactly what it is, right? You hide a bone from a dog and he's sniffing around trying to find it. You know what it is.

It's not a mystery to you. Might be a momentary mystery to him, but he'll sniff it out and find it. But it's a hidden thing.

Verse 7, for the hidden thing of anomia, the hidden thing of lawlessness, the hidden thing of lack of constraint, the hidden thing of no law, no respect for law, no obedience to law. The hidden thing of no law is already at work and it's from Energeia. It's working now.

Lawlessness is around us now. There are lots of people who broke against any sort of constraint or restriction, aren't there? We see them all around us and they've been historically around since Cain. The hidden thing of no law.

It's not a mystery. Lawlessness is not a mystery, but it works in hidden ways, doesn't it? There are closed doors and smoky rooms and private meetings and conspiracies and collusion and groups and individuals who get together and in secret plot and plan and scheme and do things. Sometimes it comes out.

Sometimes it never does. But the hidden thing of no law is already at work. Only the restrainer.

This is literally from the Greek. There is only the restrainer, manon, only that which restrains, only that which holds back at present until out of the midst it comes, actually becomes. It's from Ginnomai.

And once again, you go back to the title of this section. The hidden thing of no law is already at work. Only the restrainer.

There's only one thing stopping lawlessness from just running completely amok, and it's this restraining element. There is only one restraining element, manon. Only one thing stops it.

Only one thing holds it back at present until out of the midst. It's very graphic in Greek. Out of the midst.

There's something in the midst of the lawlessness that is holding it in check. And when it becomes out from the midst, that's when it will be revealed. That's when it will take off like a wildfire.

Well, what is it that comes out of the midst of all of this lawlessness? It's been threaded through this entire paragraph, hasn't it? From the very beginning in the heading. The coming of the Lord Jesus and our gathering unto him. The standing away.

That which restrains is taken out of the way. Now, you know what it is that holds it back. Even though the hidden thing, the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, it's going to be held in check until that which is in its midst is taken out.

Very clear. Very graphic. Well, that concludes verse 7. And the wonderful thing is, look at our role.

Look at what we are here to do. Simply minding our business. Being people of faith.

Trusting in God. Claiming righteousness by faith. Thinking about our reward.

Our inheritance. Our citizenship in the kingdom. Thinking about where we are going.

Thinking about the coming of the Lord Jesus. Paul is writing this to people that are persecuted. Tribulated.

They are afflicted. And what does he say? Look, don't worry about those that are troubling you. God's got them in hand.

Don't worry about circumstances. Don't think the day of the Lord's already come. Because remember, you are the restraining influence that is keeping this stuff from running amok.

It's only you. You are the only thing stopping this from overflowing and flooding the world. And it's going to continue to be restrained.

These people cannot get the upper hand. They cannot push away or rise above until God reveals the man of sin. You remember this.

I told you this when I was with you. And now you know what it is that holds it back. And now you know what your role is.

You're to stay in Thessalonica. You are to continue to be salt and light in the midst of that crooked and perverse generation. That's your role.

That's your job. God will decide the moment when you will be taken to the Lord Jesus and this stuff can the sewer can overflow. But it's not yet.

The mystery is already at work. Lawlessness is already at work. But now you know what it is that holds it in check.

And by implication, he's saying it's you. Remember I told you this when I was with you. This is your purpose.

That's our purpose. We're here for a reason. And we don't have to march.

We don't have to get signs. We don't have to go, you know, petitioning. We don't have to, you know, get out the vote and be politically active and picket and all this.

Write letters and bug congressmen. What do we do? How do we restrain? We let God the Holy Spirit accomplish his perfect work in us. God is at work in us to will and to do for his good pleasure.

When we're faithful, when we're quiet, stay at home, work with our hands, operate by faith, this suppresses. It's very... It suppresses evil. It suppresses lawlessness.

It's very counterintuitive. You think, well, if we're going to suppress evil, we got to get out there and vigilante or, you know, become law enforcement or something. But it's odd.

It is in being what we are supposed to be that we suppress all of this lawlessness that is at work. And they can't fight it because we don't operate with their weapons. They can't get rid of us because we're not playing on their playing field.

They're all padded up and ready to go out and, you know, rush the quarterback. We're not on the field. We're somewhere else.

Our weapons are not of this world. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood. And because we are operating in faith, all of these physical assault mechanisms, all of the propaganda, all of the scheming and plotting doesn't work because they're at the wrong level.

We are already up where they are trying to get. We are in Christ who has risen above all principalities and powers, who has taken captivity captive and has given gifts to men. So there, you know, the only way we can be defeated is to get down in the mud and use the same tools and the same types of efforts as the enemy.

As long as we stay in Christ, as long as we abide in the vine that produced divine fruit, lay up treasure in heaven, it kills them. They can't get at us. They're blocking a ghost.

They're chasing a phantom because we're on a different plane. We just have to remember who we are and why we're here. One of the reasons we are here is by faith, righteousness by faith, we suppress and hold in check all of the hidden mechanisms of lawlessness.

Doesn't make human sense, but it makes perfect divine sense. And God will pick a time when we are taken out of the way. We're taken out in every generation by death.

But there's a succeeding generation that picks up the torch and continues that work of shining the light and being salt in a generation. Well, there's going to come a generation where it's all taken out at once. Then it's all going to break loose.

That's what we'll look at when we pick up our study in verse 8 next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful opportunity you have given us by allowing us to live in this age, to have the divine resources and enabling and empowering truth of your word, the presence of your Holy Spirit, the blessings from the Lord Jesus Christ himself that enable us to live a supernatural life, to fulfill a supernatural calling, and to move into a supernatural kingdom that will last and abide forever.

We thank you for the comfort and encouragement that you give us. We thank you for your provisions and your blessings on us, and we pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful of the difference that exists between us and those who are in the world, between the spirit

and the flesh, between the darkness and the light, between regeneration and the lost and fallen condition from which we came, so that we can live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name.

Amen.