

How to Live *in the* Last Days

Paul's Second Letter to the Church at Thessalonica

2 Thessalonians

Prayer (1:1–4)

Relief when Jesus comes (1:5–10)

Prayer (1:11–12)

Opposition before Jesus comes (2:1–12)

Prayer (2:13–17 & 3:1–5)

Work until Jesus comes (3:6–15)

Prayer (3:16–18)

God's Main Point *in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12*

Christians—those who love the truth of the gospel—will not experience the judgment that will fall on the gospel-rejecting world when Jesus comes. But, until he comes, we should expect intensifying (even horrific) opposition.

Explaining & Applying

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

1. Paul confronts the church's major error—they imagined that they were experiencing God's judgment. But Christians will never experience the judgment of "the day of the Lord" (verses 1–2).
2. Paul teaches that the church will experience increasing opposition before Jesus comes. But don't fear it at all (verses 3–9).
3. Paul emphasizes the only two responses of people to the gospel of Jesus—you either *love* it or you *delight* in being your own authority (verses 10–12).

Challenges in Interpreting

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

1. *What is the length of “the day of the Lord”?* (verses 1-2)

- (a) less than 1 year
- (b) 1-2 years
- (c) 7-8 years

2. *What is “the rebellion”?* (verse 3)

- (a) “normal” apostasy
- (b) massive church apostasy
- (c) intense world rebellion

3. *What is “the temple”?* (verse 4)

- (a) the temple in Jerusalem
- (b) the church
- (c) metaphorical for “complete opposition to all true worship of God”

4. *Who or what is “the restrainer”?* (verses 6-7)

- (a) governmental law & order
- (b) God
- (c) the church
- (d) the angel Michael

Challenges in Interpreting

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

1. Not every passage in the Bible is this difficult.
2. In these four tough interpretations, it's okay if you decide on one, and it's okay if you don't
3. The fact that some of the details are fuzzy doesn't mean that the main ideas are fuzzy.

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“We have differences, but we’re not divided.”

— Johnny Lausin

“Paul’s message [to the Thessalonians] is intended to encourage and comfort.... Whatever disagreements we have on the details...dare not divide us or prevent fellowship and cooperative service. Apocalyptic literature in both testaments is regularly intended to console beleaguered Christians, not to divide them into warring camps!”

— Craig Blomberg

“We believe in the blessed hope, the imminent return of Jesus Christ, when He will gather living and dead saints to Himself to be with Him forever. The coming of Christ, which will occur at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and motivates the believer to perseverance in godly living. We believe that at His second coming in glory, Jesus will establish his earthly kingdom and rule over all the nations....”

— Tri-County Bible Church, *Statement of Faith*