

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

New American Standard Bible

“Do you worry about the anti-Christ?”

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness¹ is revealed, the son of destruction,⁴ who opposes² and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in

¹ ἀνομίας

² ὁ ἀντίκειμαι, participle of a term also found in Luke 13:17, 21:15; Cor. 16:9 Phil 1:28, 1 Timothy 5:14; Acc. to Lothar Schmid in TDNT Vol. III, p 657.

his time he will be revealed.⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness³ is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.

⁸ Then that lawless one⁴ will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;⁹ *that is*, the one⁵ whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

In one lesson, we can't cover all the details in today's reading.

³ ἀνομίας

⁴ ὁ ἄνομος

⁵ The New American Standard Bible correctly translates verse nine: “*that is*, the one whose coming (appearance or “parousia”) is in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders.” The words “lawless one” and/or “lawlessness” appear in and verses 3 and 6. Neither expression appears in the original of verse 9, though the verse intimates the coming of “the lawless one.”

Our challenge exceeds that of a parent whose ten kids come home from school all at once, each with a serious issue.

In 20 minutes, we can't encompass every matter this text suggests.

We might need at least 21 minutes.

Yet, 10,000 kids couldn't cause the confusion scholars have created regarding this text.

Notice the warnings in verses and 2:

Do **“not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed”**

Interpretations voiced of this chapter scare and disturb millions of people.

People speculate in dread about the anti-Christ.

Do you fear meeting the anti-Christ?

In 1968, Roman Polanski produced a movie based on a 1967 book by Ira Levin.

Did you see that movie entitled *Rosemary's Baby*?

According to the plot of *Rosemary's Baby*, a woman gave birth to the so-called anti-Christ.

That movie, *Rosemary's Baby*, frightened lots of people silly.

Resulting terror increased church attendance a while at the Hollywood Church of Christ.

Did you ever fret about what the anti-Christ might do to you and your loved ones?

Some folks become anxious, unsettled and alarmed.

You can't blame ministers for the book or movie entitled *Rosemary's Baby*.

Preachers do, however, bear responsibility for spreading deception about the anti-Christ.

They draw false conclusions and spread misinformation.

They also create unnecessary fear.

Do you know that anti-Christ's have likely sat near you without your knowledge?

Numerous so-called Bible experts teach that today's text refers to the anti-Christ.

These “scholars” make this claim in the face of facts that disprove their theories.

To what facts do I allude?

First, not in the original language or in respected translations, will you find the term “anti-Christ” in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

Second, the term “anti-Christ” does not appear anywhere in the *Book of Revelation*.

Third, the term anti-Christ appears only in the *First and Second Epistles of John*, which were written toward the end of the first century AD.⁶

Fourth, the apostle John clearly told us how to identify the anti-Christ.

Note the context in which the term anti-Christ and its definition in 2 John 6b-9:

6b “As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. 7 I say this because many deceivers, 7 who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not

⁶ “Anti-Christ” occurs in 1 John 2:18, 22, & 4:3.

⁷ πλάνοι

continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God.”

The above text clearly says that many anti-Christes existed in the first century AD.

The Old Testament taught that the messiah (Hebrew) or Christ (Greek)--the “anointed one,” would appear in human flesh.⁸

By the first century, Greek thought pervaded many Jewish communities.

Many Greeks taught that flesh is evil and spirit is good.

If it’s true that flesh is evil, (Christ) couldn’t have appeared in the flesh because God can’t be a part of anything evil.

Greek ideas began affecting some Christians, distorting the Good News.

The flesh-is-evil theory doesn’t fit scripture. **Recall how Jesus proved his resurrection?** “They (the apostles) were terrified and filled with fear, and supposed that they had seen a spirit (or “ghost” as in NIV).³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts?”³⁹ See my hands and my feet,

⁸ See Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, 7; 11:1-16; 52:13-54:17, & Micah 5:2, e.g.

that it is truly me. Touch me and see, for a spirit (pneuma) doesn't have flesh (sarka) and bones (ostea), as you see that I have.’⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands (xeiras) (chiro) and his feet (podas).⁹

Through Dr. Luke's gospel, Jesus used several anatomy terms here, didn't he?

- Spirit is pneuma= pneumonia.
- Bones-ostea=osteopath
- Hands-xeiras= chiropractor
- Feet-podas=podiatrist

True, the Bible often uses the term “flesh” to represent human resistance to God, as in Romans 8: 3, 4:

“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk

according to the flesh (sarka) but according to the Spirit.”

Living “according to the flesh” means that we choose to disobey God's Word and refuse to walk by Jesus' Spirit.

Flesh isn't inherently evil; we just think we know better than God does and we disobey Him.

Jesus showed us that we overcome by obeying God and following Christ:

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body (sarx=flesh) through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.”¹⁰

⁹ Luke 24: 37-40 World English Bible

¹⁰ Colossians 1:21-23

Jesus lived in flesh like ours.

He resisted all the fleshly attractions to which we regularly succumb.

Jealous folks crucified the only one who ever lived in the flesh to perfectly please God.

On the cross, he died in the flesh.

Three days later, he arose in flesh and bones.

He came back with nail and spear marks of death in that flesh, but very much alive.

Anti-christs deny that truth:

“Many deceivers,¹¹ who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.” 8

True believers act on the truth that Jesus is God’s one and only son and that he lived obediently in flesh and blood just like ours.

I believe that and I pray that you do, too, in the only Son of God.

I want to do everything I can to help others see that only Jesus knows the way to God.

He told us how to live, and also showed us.

Note Paul’s prayers for the Thessalonians:

“May your spirit and soul and body (your total person) be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹²

Anti-Christ(s) (there are many of them) deny that the divine Son ever came in the flesh.

Believe that lie, and you have no hope because we all live in flesh and blood.

Let’s return to our 2 Thessalonians text:

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* (he refers to the Day of the Lord or Judgment-see verse one) unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness¹³ is revealed, the son of destruction,⁴ who opposes¹⁴ and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

The prefix “anti” appears in our text, but not connected to the term Christ.

¹² 1 Thessalonians 5:23 NASB

¹³ ἀνομίας

¹⁴ ὁ ἀντίκειμαι participle as in Luke 13:17, 21:15; Cor. 16:9 Phil 1:28, 1 Timothy 5:14; Acc. to Lothar Schmid in TDNT Vol III, p 657.

¹¹ πλάνοι

“Anti” connects with a different word and points to something equally insidious.

In v. 4 “anti” is a prefix to the first word in the Greek text.

To my knowledge, no English translation uses the term “anti” anywhere in 2 Thess. 2. **Its v. 4 appearance refers to an opponent of God, who resists and tries to displace God.**

Foes of God come in many forms.

News reports tell of folks wanting crosses removed and demand “in God we trust” deleted from coins and dollar bills.

But the word apostasy (v. 3) and other clues lead me to think this refers to an inside job.

This apparently describes a religious figure going astray and wanting to usurp God.

Note particularly the expressions “lawlessness” and “lawless one.”

You possibly know the meaning of the word Deuteronomy.

The Greek word *deuteros* means “two” or “second;” the Greek word *nomos* means “law.”

Thus the OT book of Deuteronomy contains the second giving of Moses’ Law. Think of that word *nomos*=law.

Place an “a” before the English word “theist” (one who believes in God) and you have “atheist.” **You know what atheists think.**

Place an alpha, the Greek equivalent of ‘a,’ before *nomos* and you have the word that means “no law” or “opposing law.”

Thus the Greek word “*nomos*” preceded an by an alpha -- “*ἄνομος*”

The **lawless one** or **lawlessness** opposes, stands in opposition, to God and His laws.

Oddly, the Lectionary might be an example of religious folks leading others astray through neglecting God’s laws.

By Lectionary, I refer to sets of readings designated for each Sunday of the year, which are used by many churches.

As advertised, the lectionary, if followed, takes one through the Bible in three years.

A few years ago, a friend volunteered to take one of my old Bibles and highlight all of the lectionary readings over a three year period.

I am deeply indebted to her for doing a great job; I have that Bible with me.

Beverly highlighted in yellow three consecutive years of lectionary readings.

Many parts of this Bible remain un-highlighted, which means that you will not hear or read the entire Bible.

Who created the Lectionary?

At the Second Vatican Council of 1962, called by Pope John XXIII, work began on the Lectionary.

They aimed to increase Bible knowledge. Many Protestant denominations have since adapted the Lectionary for their churches. **The “My Notes” sheet lists info supplied by Felix Just, Society of Jesus, Ph.D.**

If you read the Scriptures on this chart Sundays and weekdays for three years, you will have been exposed to 71.5 % of the NT.

Listen to merely the Sunday and feast day readings, you will hear only 40.8% of the NT.

The *Book of Acts* traces the establishment of the Lord’s church by the Holy Spirit.

A Catholic attending mass every day of the year will hear less than half of *Acts*.

Those who attend on Sundays and major feast, and most protestant groups, will hear 16.4 %.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC LECTIONARY WEBSITE

by Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.

NT Summary:

NT Section	NAB		Pre-Vatican II Missal: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Weekdays	
	# Chap.	# Vv. Total	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used
Gospels (4)	89	3779	848	22.4 %	2184	57.8 %	3393	89.8 %
Acts	28	1007	35	3.5 %	165	16.4 %	492	48.9 %
Pauline Letters (7)	61	1493	270	18.1 %	468	31.3 %	846	56.7 %
Deutero-Paulines (6)	26	539	82	15.2 %	201	37.3 %	349	64.7 %
Hebrews	13	303	17	5.6 %	84	27.6 %	188	62.0 %
Catholic Epistles (7)	21	432	57	13.2 %	107	24.7 %	292	67.6 %
Book of Revelation	22	404	0	0 %	38	9.4 %	129	31.9 %
NT w/o Gospels	171	4178	461	11.0 %	1063	25.4 %	2296	54.9 %
NT Grand Total	260	7957	1309	16.5 %	3247	40.8 %	5689	71.5 %

About a year ago, a woman who has attended church most of her life, came to our Tuesday night home study.

We were reading and discussing the *Book of Titus*.

When her turn came, she read the qualifications for elders outlined in Titus 1. After she read a few sentences, she stopped and exclaimed in shock: **“O my God!”**

In seven decades of church and Bible studies, she had never read what God’s word states concerning those who lead the church.

Few denominations follow the guidelines the Apostle said should be instituted in every church.

It’s no wonder.

As far as I can tell, the Lectionary does not include them. The Lectionary’s first Titus reading begins in chapter 2: 11.

Neither does the Lectionary include the first 12 verses of 1 Timothy 3, which outlines the qualifications of elders and deacons.

It also avoids the Apostle Peter’s instructions concerning the behavior of church leaders in *1 Peter 5:1-5*

If religious leaders do things the way they want; not how God’s word specifies, aren’t they displacing God?

I challenge you to read *Titus* this week in your Bible—all of it.

Once you finish Titus, read all of 2 Thessalonians.

I also strongly encourage you to begin your own Bible reading schedule that’s 100%.

Recall what Jesus told the devil?

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”¹⁵

If you don’t read or hear all the Scripture, how can you fully obey God’s Word?

People who know and obey Jesus need not fear the anti-Christ or anyone.

But I do fear for you and me if we oppose God or neglect His word.

¹⁵ Matthew 4:4 NIV

God bless you as you read and fully comply with His word.

For your information, here is the reading from Titus which shocked the woman at our Bible study: **Titus 1:1-9 NIV**

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,³ and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,⁴ To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

⁵ The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. ⁶ An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

⁷ Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather, he must be

hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

None of the above was highlighted.

Does your church or denomination follow these guidelines?

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