

The background image shows ancient ruins. In the foreground, there's a low stone wall made of irregular blocks. To the right, a more substantial structure with four tall, fluted columns and a partially ruined entablature stands. The ground is a mix of dirt and stone. In the middle ground, a blue body of water is visible, with a small peninsula or headland in the distance. The background features rolling hills or mountains under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians

CHAPTER TWO

OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

- **Chapter One**

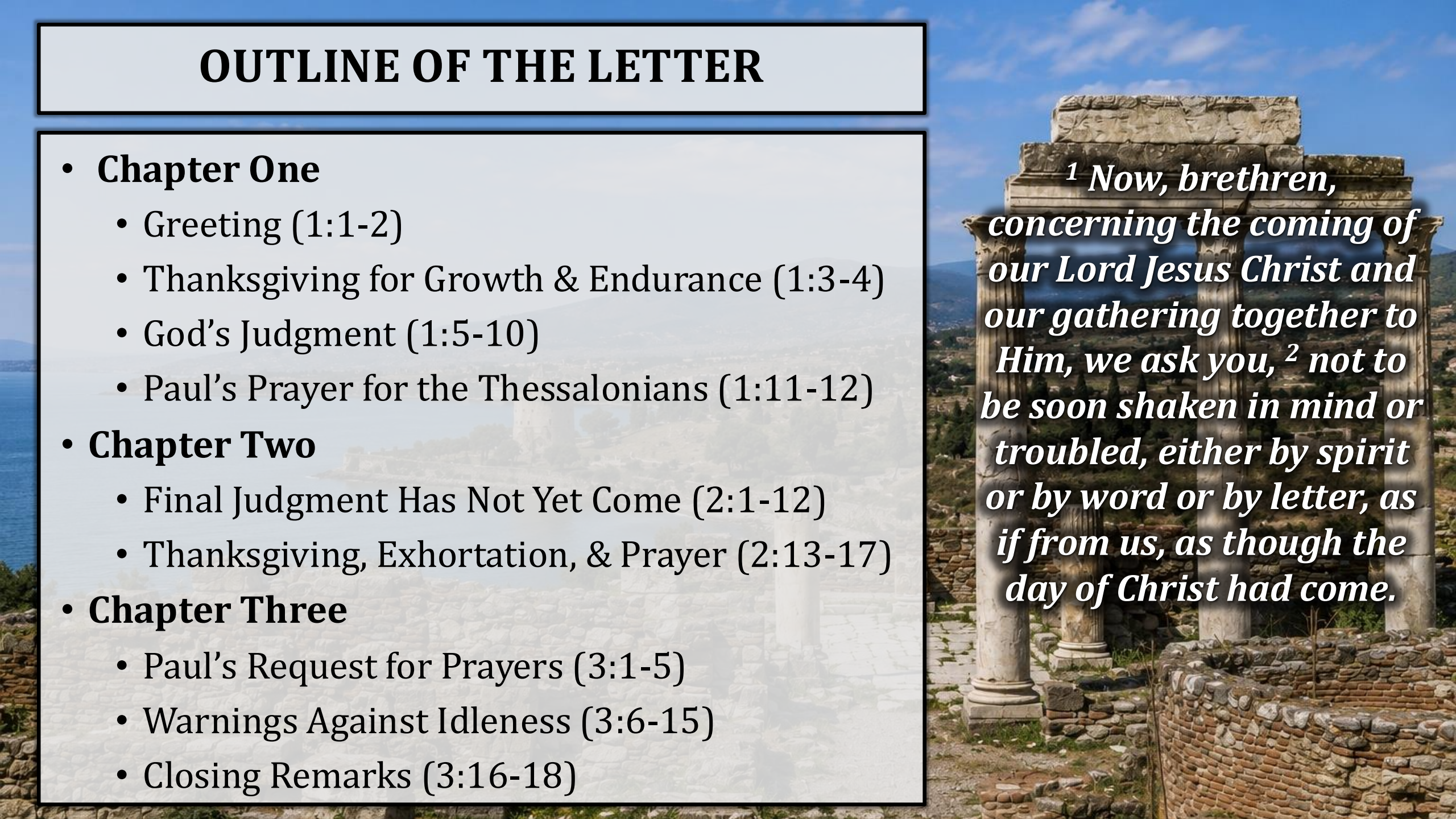
- Greeting (1:1-2)
- Thanksgiving for Growth & Endurance (1:3-4)
- God's Judgment (1:5-10)
- Paul's Prayer for the Thessalonians (1:11-12)

- **Chapter Two**

- Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)
- Thanksgiving, Exhortation, & Prayer (2:13-17)

- **Chapter Three**

- Paul's Request for Prayers (3:1-5)
- Warnings Against Idleness (3:6-15)
- Closing Remarks (3:16-18)



*¹ Now, brethren,
concerning the coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ and
our gathering together to
Him, we ask you, ² not to
be soon shaken in mind or
troubled, either by spirit
or by word or by letter, as
if from us, as though the
day of Christ had come.*

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

¹ Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

- “Coming” is a phrase Paul uses consistently in reference to Christ’s return (1 Thess. 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:8).
- “Our gathering together” describes the assembling of God’s people around Christ (Heb 10:25; Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27).
 - The dead in Christ will rise first, then all living saints will be caught up “together” to meet the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
 - Christ is the destination and center of this gathering. Believers will be gathered “to Him” and remain with Him forever (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17, 5:10).

NOTE Christ’s “coming” and “our gathering together to Him” are grammatically joined as two aspects of one event (see also 2 Thess. 2:2, 8).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. (NIV)

- Paul did not want the Thessalonians to be “shaken in mind or troubled.”
 - “Shaken” – waver, agitate, rock, topple; figuratively, to disturb or incite (Strong) (**Matt. 11:7; Acts 4:31; Heb. 12:26-27**).
 - “Troubled” – to be troubled in mind, to be frightened, alarmed (Thayer) (**Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7**).
 - Biblical teaching about Christ's return should produce hope and comfort for believers, not alarm and panic (**1 Thess. 4:18, 5:11**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

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not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. (NIV)

- Paul did not want the Thessalonians to be “shaken in mind or troubled.”
- False claims were circulating about the “day of Christ.” Sound familiar?
 - “Spirit” – a supposed prophecy or claim of divine revelation (**1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1**).
 - “Word” – an oral message falsely attributed to Paul et al. (**2 Thess. 2:15**).
 - “Letter, as if from us” – a forged letter bearing Paul’s name or misrepresentation of something he wrote (**2 Thess. 2:15, 3:17**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

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not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. (NIV)

- Paul did not want the Thessalonians to be “shaken in mind or troubled.”
- False claims were circulating about the “day of Christ.” Sound familiar?
 - Specifically, the claims were that “the day of Christ had come.”
 - The KJV’s “is at hand” is misleading. The Greek verb means to be present, to have arrived, or to be already here, not to be approaching (**see Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22; 7:26; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 9:9**).
 - Paul refutes this by identifying events that had not yet occurred (**2 Thess. 3:3-8**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

- The Thessalonians were warned not to be deceived by the sources of misinformation because “that Day will not come” until:
 - “The falling away comes first.”
 - The New Testament repeatedly warns against apostasy (**Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3**).
 - The definite article “the” points a specific apostasy, something already known from Paul’s previous teaching (**2 Thess. 2:5**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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- The Thessalonians were warned not to be deceived by the sources of misinformation because “that Day will not come” until:
 - “The falling away comes first.”
 - Some premillennial interpreters translate it “the departure” and identify it with Christians physically departing from the earth. That interpretation is not supported by the word’s biblical usage, nor Paul’s previous teaching on gathering before Christ (**1 Thess. 4:17**).

“Even if ‘departure’ were an acceptable rendering, the reference would be to a departure from faith, not from the earth” (Weaver, p.477).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

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- The Thessalonians were warned not to be deceived by the sources of misinformation because “that Day will not come” until:
 - “The falling away comes first.”
 - “The man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.”
 - This figure embodies deliberate resistance to God’s revealed authority (**consider John 17:12; Phil. 3:19; Rev. 17:8, 11**).
 - **2 Thess. 2:4-12** provide the identifying characteristics of this figure.
 - Although his rise and influence may appear impressive, his final destruction is already certain (**2 Thess. 2:8**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

... the man of sin ... the son of perdition

Scriptural Facts By Which To Identify Him (Harkrider, p.112)

1. *An individual person is named ("that man," v.3; "himself," "he," v.4; "his time," v.6; "lawless one," v.8).*
2. *He is lawless (opposes God's law); a child of perdition (doomed to destruction), vv.3, 8.*
3. *He will sit in the sanctuary of God (in God's own place) as though he is God, v.4.*
4. *He will be unveiled after the one who restrains is taken out of the way, vv.6-7.*
5. *After ... revealed ... the Lord will destroy him with the brightness of His coming, v.8.*
6. *He is in the complete control and service of Satan, v.9.*
7. *He is successful only with those who receive not the love of the truth, vv.10-12.*

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

... the man of sin ... the son of perdition

Scriptural Facts By Which To Identify Him (Harkrider, p.112)

"Applying these facts leads us to believe that an individual wicked person is intended. Perhaps he is the leader of some system that promotes wickedness, whether it be a government, apostate church, or some political or religious party. But nothing in the context indicates that figurative language is employed, thus we must follow an important rule of hermeneutics. 'All words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless the evident meaning of the context forbids,' (Hermeneutics, D. R Dungan, 184). Following this rule of interpretation would negate that a composite system be meant, such as Judaism, Catholicism, Protestant-ism, or Islam. However, what is not stated is how well known this man will be. The text does not demand that he is a world leader. He may be only a spiritual leader whose specific work is to deceive those who might otherwise serve God in an attempt to abolish the camp of the saints."

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and as a result he takes his seat in God's temple, displaying himself as God. (NET)

- The man of sin “opposes” & “exalts” himself over every object of worship, giving the false impression that He is God (**consider Isa. 14:13-14; Dan. 11:36; Ezek. 28:2-9**).
- The man of sin is not Satan because his coming is according to the working of Satan (**2 Thess. 2:9**). Rather, he is an instrument through whom Satan works.

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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- As result, “he sits as God in the temple of God.”
 - “Sits” pictures enthronement – the assumption of a position of authority.
 - “Temple” ordinarily denotes the dwelling place of God.
 - Old Testament (**1 Kgs. 8:10-13; Psalm 26:8; Ezek. 43:4-7; etc.**).
 - New Testament (**1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22; etc.**).

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- As result, “he sits as God in the temple of God.”
- Therefore, Paul appears to describe a lawless authority arising within the realm of Christianity and claiming authority that belongs exclusively to God.
 - God alone has authority to legislate man's relationship with Him (**Jms. 4:12**).
 - Christ alone is head of the church (**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18**), and no person or institution may change His teaching (**Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

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- As result, “he sits as God in the temple of God.”
- Therefore, Paul appears to describe a lawless authority arising within the realm of Christianity and claiming authority that belongs exclusively to God.

“By his enactments and decrees, the man of sin would usurp the Lord's authority in religion, taking prerogatives and privileges that belong only to God” (Mayberry, p.48).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? Don't you remember that I repeatedly told you about these things when I was still with you? (ISV)

- “Told” is imperfect and may indicate repeated instruction, implying that Paul discussed the apostasy and man of sin more than once.
- The Thessalonians received oral instruction that has not been preserved for us.

“The whole subject of the second advent of the Saviour seems to have constituted an important part of the instructions of Paul when at Thessalonica ... Much of the obscurity of this prophecy arises from the fact, that the apostle alludes to things which he had told them when with them, of which we have now no knowledge. Hence, what would be perfectly clear to them, on reading this letter, is now difficult to be understood” (Barnes, 84-85).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

⁶ Now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. And you know what restrains him now [from being revealed]; it is so that he will be revealed at his own [appointed] time. (AMP)

- The lawless one was restrained so that he would be “revealed in his own time” (2 Thess. 2:7; also consider Acts 1:7; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 6:15).
 - How was he restrained?
 - Paul's readers likely knew how, but we do not possess everything he orally taught them. The leading possibilities are:
 - Apostolic influence (Acts 20:29-31; Gal. 2:4-5).
 - The gospel (Tit. 2:11-12).
 - Civil authority (Rom. 13:1-4), likely Roman. This is the prevailing view.
 - Its precise identification should not be asserted dogmatically.

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way. (NET)

- “For” explains why restraint was necessary: “the mystery of lawlessness” was “already at work.” This influence was actively operating in Paul’s day.
 - Apostasy did not suddenly appear centuries later; its principles were already visible in departures from apostolic teaching (**1 Tim. 4:1-3**).
- “Mystery” means something hidden or not yet openly revealed (**Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:3-5; Col. 1:26**).
- “Lawlessness” means rebellion against divine law (**Matt. 7:23, 24:12; 1 John 3:4**).

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- “For” explains why restraint was necessary: “the mystery of lawlessness” was “already at work.” This influence was actively operating in Paul’s day.
- Whoever/whatever restrained the man of sin would continue to do so “until He is taken out of the way.”
 - The capitalization of “He” in the NKJV is interpretive. Ancient manuscripts did not use capitalization to identify the restrainer as God/Christ/the Holy Spirit.
“The restraint can be spoken of as a force or as a person” (NET Footnotes).

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 - The capitalization of “He” in the NKJV is interpretive. Ancient manuscripts did not use capitalization to identify the restrainer as God/Christ/the Holy Spirit.
 - Once removed, the lawless principle already operating secretly could develop into its open, organized manifestation (**2 Thess. 2:8-9**).

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- “For” explains why restraint was necessary: “the mystery of lawlessness” was “already at work.” This influence was actively operating in Paul’s day.
- Whoever/whatever restrained the man of sin would continue to do so “until He is taken out of the way.”
- Consider a practical lesson:
 - Apostasy often develops gradually and secretly. Therefore, we must guard against even “small” departures from God’s word before they mature into established systems of error (**Heb. 2:1; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 4:3-4**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

- “Then” contrasts with “now” in the previous verse. Once the restrainer is removed, the lawless power that had been operating secretly will be openly “revealed.”
- “The lawless one” is the man of sin and son of perdition mentioned in **2 Thess. 2:3**.
- This entity will be:
 - Consumed by the Lord “with the breath of His mouth” (**Isa. 11:4**).
 - “Consume” – to take away, abolish; to put out of the way, kill, slay (Thayer) (**Luke 22:2; Acts 9:23-24, 22:20**).
 - Christ needs only to speak, and His enemy is powerless before Him (**Psalms 33:6; Rev. 19:15, 21**).

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- This entity will be:
 - Consumed by the Lord “with the breath of His mouth” (**Isa. 11:4**).
 - Destroyed by the Lord “with the brightness of His coming.”
 - “Brightness” – an appearing, appearance, manifestation (Vine) (**1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Tit. 2:13**).
 - The lawless one will be completely overthrown by the appearance of Christ, not by human political or military power (**2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 19:19-21**).

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- This entity will be:
 - Consumed by the Lord “with the breath of His mouth” (**Isa. 11:4**).
 - Destroyed by the Lord “with the brightness of His coming.”
- No false entity can withstand Christ. His word exposes error now, and His return will bring every lawless power to a complete end (**John 8:31-32; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Rev. 19:15-21**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

- This entity is not Satan, but his “coming ... is according to the working of Satan.”
 - Satan’s power actively operates through him (**John 8:44; Rev. 13:2-4, 12-14**).
- Three words resemble descriptions of genuine divine miracles:
 - “Power” – might, strength, force, capability; a deed of power, miracle (BDAG).
 - “Sign” – a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known; an event offered as confirmation (BDAG).
 - “Wonder” – something strange, causing the beholder to marvel (Vine).
 - God authenticated Christ and His apostles through miracles, signs, and wonders (**Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4**).

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 - “Sign” – a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known; an event offered as confirmation (BDAG).
 - “Wonder” – something strange, causing the beholder to marvel (Vine).
 - The consensus among commentators is that the lawless one will perform real supernatural acts serving a lie (**Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13-14**), but the phrase “lying wonders” may imply fake supernatural acts.

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

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... with all power and false signs and wonders, (ESV)

... with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, (RSV)

“Most of the commentators assume that ‘the power and signs and wonders’ describe real miracles being worked by the man of sin ... Generally the argument runs along the following line: The word lying only means that the miracles belong to the realm of falsehood, to the sphere of the one called ‘the father of all lies’ (John 8:44), and serving his ends—not that they are merely pretended miracles and have no supernatural ‘power’ behind them ... Apart from what is found here there is little to no evidence that Satan is capable (has the power of himself) to perform real miracles ... Can anyone but God work a real miracle?” (Weaver, p.511-514).

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 - “Power” – might, strength, force, capability; a deed of power, miracle (BDAG).
 - “Sign” – a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known; an event offered as confirmation (BDAG).
 - “Wonder” – something strange, causing the beholder to marvel (Vine).
 - Whatever the case, the work of Satan – legitimate or fake – does not compare to the work of God (**Exod. 7:8-13; Acts 8:9-13, 18-19**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (ESV)

with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved. (NET)

- The lawless one's power is joined with "all unrighteous deception."
 - Error is often effective because it deceives people into thinking unrighteousness is actually righteous, harmless, or spiritually beneficial (**Isa. 5:20; Col. 2:20-23**).

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- The lawless one's power is joined with "all unrighteous deception."
- Those deceived by the lawless one will "perish" (**1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15, 4:3**).
 - Those who follow the son of perdition will ultimately share his perdition (**Matt. 15:13-14; Rev. 19:20**).

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- Those deceived by the lawless one will "perish" (**1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15, 4:3**).
- They will perish not because they are predestined to do so, but because they did not "receive the love the truth, that they might be saved."
 - "Receive" – to receive by deliberate and ready reception of what is offered (Vine) (**1 Thess. 1:6, 2:13**).

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- Those deceived by the lawless one will "perish" (**1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15, 4:3**).
- They will perish not because they are predestined to do so, but because they did not "receive the love the truth, that they might be saved."
 - Those led astray by the lawless one will perish because they chose to believe the lie rather than the truth (**2 Thess. 2:11-12; 2 Tim. 4:3-4**)

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

- “For this reason” points backward. Because these people refuse to love the truth, God will give them over to the error they have chosen by sending them a “strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.”

- The Greek specifically says “the lie,” not merely a lie.
 - This may refer to the man of sin’s claims in occupying God’s place and exercising His authority (**2 Thess. 2:4**).
- Satan supplies the lie (**2 Thess. 2:9-10**), while God judicially permits.

“The source of this lie is not from God, but from Satan, James 1:13. When people choose error and love that more than they do the truth, God withdraws all restraint, Rom. 1:24, 26, 28. He permits one to believe a lie” (Harkrider, p.118).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

- “For this reason” points backward. Because these people refuse to love the truth, God will give them over to the error they have chosen by sending them a “strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.”
 - Note that they **FIRST** reject truth (**2 Thess. 2:10**), THEN God sends a delusion (**John 3:19-21; Rom. 1:18-28**).

“Just how much the words God shall send them strong delusion point to the permissive will of God and how much to His judicial act finds no easy answer. We can be assured that He gives the wicked over to the evil which they have deliberately chosen for themselves” (Weaver, p.519).

- God does not deceive or compel sincere truth seekers to believe falsehood (**Jms. 1:13; Matt. 7:7; Phil. 3:15**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

God's Final Judgment Has Not Yet Come (2:1-12)

¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- Those deceived by the lawless one will be “condemned” because they:
 - “Did not believe the truth” (**John 8:31-32; John 3:18; Rom. 2:8**).
 - “Had pleasure in unrighteousness.”
 - This explains the success of the deception. They love unrighteousness (**Psalms 119:72; 1 John 5:17; Rom. 1:32; Phil. 3:18-19**).
 - “There can be no more just ground of condemnation than that a man loves to do wrong” (Barnes, 92).*
- Two paths are presented that are applicable to every period. Which do we travel?
 - No love for truth → delight in sin → believe Satan’s lies → condemned.
 - Love truth → believe truth → obey truth → saved (**2 Thess. 2:10, 13-15**).

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *Pagan Mythology*

- *Liberal theologians contend that Paul's concept of the man of sin reflects a belief in ancient, pagan mythology—an idea that had been absorbed by the early Christians.*
- *This view rejects the proposition that the Scriptures are inspired of God. The text of 2 Thessalonians, therefore, allegedly only reflects early "Christian" ideas, not actual reality.*
- *This concept is totally inconsistent with biblical claims and proofs regarding the inspiration of the apostolic documents.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *Satan Himself*

- *Some have argued that the man of sin is Satan himself. This view cannot be correct.*
- *Satan was not a part of "the falling away" (v. 3), and this "lawless one" is said to come "according to the working of Satan" (v. 9), which obviously distinguishes him from Satan personally.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *Principle of Evil*

- *Some allege that no specific power or persons are in view. Rather, the apostle merely has personified a principle or idea of evil, which may appear in various forms in different historical periods as an opponent of truth. It may be manifest as Islam, Fascism, Communism, and other ungodly movements.*
- *But this concept does not fit the specific descriptions in this chapter. The text tells of a particular movement—"the falling away" (v. 3). How would that refer to Communism, for example?*
- *Moreover, there are too many personal references within the narrative to dismiss it as mere personification.*
- *Finally, it is "the man of sin," with the article pointing to a definite, specific influence, rather than a generic one.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *Judaism*

- *Radical preterists (those who contend that all Bible prophecy, including the second coming of Christ, was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem) argue that the man of sin was the "hardened, militant Jews (Zealots in particular)" (King, 318).*
- *This theory sees the man of sin as Judaism, which was destroyed by the coming of the Lord in the destruction of Jerusalem via the Romans in AD 70.*
- *The concept is totally false. Judaism was not a part of "the falling away" (v. 3).*
- *Moreover, Paul's prophecy of the second coming (the parousia [v. 8]) was not fulfilled in AD 70, as evidenced by the fact that Christians were not "gathered together" unto the Lord in connection with Jerusalem's fall (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:14ff).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *A Roman Ruler*
 - *A popular idea contends that the man of sin is a Roman ruler—perhaps Nero. Again, though, this concept does not fit the facts. No Caesar “fell away” from the faith (v. 3).*
 - *Additionally, the Roman rulers have long lain in the dust of antiquity. As Raymond Kelcy observed: “Paul contemplates the man of lawlessness being in existence and waging opposition at the time the Lord returns; the Roman empire has long ago ceased to be” (161).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Future Antichrist*

- *Millennialists contend that the man of sin "is an individual embodying anti-God power who is still to arise before the future day of the Lord" (Mare, 1073) ...*
- *... But Paul stated that the "mystery of iniquity," characteristic of the man of sin, was "already at work" in the first century (v. 7).*
- *This clearly eliminates any person who arises during the modern era. Newton's comment is appropriate: "As this evil began in the apostles' days, and was to continue in the world till the second coming of Christ in power and great glory: it necessarily follows, that it was to be carried on not by one man, but by a succession of men in several ages" (453).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *The Apostasy*
 - *The Roman Catholic system, with its autocratic papal dynasty, did not suddenly appear in a given year of history. Rather, it was a result of a gradual apostasy from the primitive faith.*
 - *Paul ... details some of the traits of this movement, such as forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from meats (1 Tim. 4:1-4).*
 - *The many corruptions of the divine economy—changes in the plan of redemption (sprinkling, infant baptism, etc.), alteration of worship (the mass, the veneration of Mary, etc.)—were progressively implemented.*
 - *Catholicism evolved as a defection from the original faith.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *The Apostasy*
 - *Not Revealed in the First Century*
 - *The apostasy was just a budding phenomenon in the apostolic age. Consequently, it was not fully "revealed" until centuries later.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *The Apostasy*
 - *Not Revealed in the First Century*
 - *Lawless*
 - *The Romish movement has exhibited a disposition of lawlessness throughout its history. Could any citation more clearly illustrate the spirit of lawlessness than this declaration regarding the papacy?*
 - *Donald Attwater, a Catholic writer, has shown that, according to Roman Catholicism, "tradition"—i.e., the voice of the church—is superior to the Scriptures (41–42).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *The Apostasy*
 - *Not Revealed in the First Century*
 - *Lawless*
 - *God-Opposing*
 - *The papacy opposes God. Surely anyone who claims to be "more than God" cannot be described as anything other than an enemy of the Almighty.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *The Apostasy*
 - *Not Revealed in the First Century*
 - *Lawless*
 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *The papal rulers, as it were, "sit in the temple of God"—i.e., the church. It is an ecclesiastical force. The pope claims that, whereas Christ is the head of the church in heaven, the papacy is the head of the church on earth.*
 - *Yet Jesus affirmed that he possessed "all authority ... in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).*

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 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *It makes claims that belong only to deity—"Our Lord God the pope; another God upon the earth, king of kings, and lord of lords" (Newton, 456).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

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 - *Lawless*
 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *It accepts adoration not proper for a man. Men bow before the papal dignitary, kiss his feet, ring, etc. Contrast the disposition of Peter when Cornelius bowed before him (Acts 10:25–26).*

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 - *Lawless*
 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *It presumes to act for God in matters pertaining exclusively to deity—e.g., offering forgiveness of sins. In Catholic doctrine, "absolution" is a "judicial act whereby a priest remits the sins of a penitent who has contrition, has made confession and promises satisfaction" (Attwater, 3).*

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 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *Claims of Miracles*
 - *The whole history of Catholicism is checkered with the claims of miracles.*

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 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *Claims of Miracles*
 - *Early Stages at Work in Paul's Day*
 - *Idolatry ... (1 Corinthians 10:14) ... worship of angels (Colossians 2:18) ... truth was sacrificed for the sake of money (cf. 1 Timothy 6:5; Titus 1:11) ... distinctions ... regarding meats (1 Corinthians 8:8), and human traditions ... (Colossians 2:23).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

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 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *Claims of Miracles*
 - *Early Stages at Work in Paul's Day*
 - *Initially Restrained by Pagan Rome*
 - *McClintock and Strong, citing numerous sources from the early "church fathers" ... said that the patristic writers "generally consider" the restraining force to be "the Roman empire" (255).*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

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 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *Claims of Miracles*
 - *Early Stages at Work in Paul's Day*
 - *Initially Restrained by Pagan Rome*
 - *It is a matter of history that when imperial Rome fell in AD 476, great power was shifted into the hands of church clerics ... After imperial Rome fell, the apostate church of that day accelerated in its power.*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *The Apostasy*
 - *Not Revealed in the First Century*
 - *Lawless*
 - *God-Opposing*
 - *Ecclesiastical Usurper of Divine Status*
 - *Usurps the Throne of God*
 - *Claims of Miracles*
 - *Early Stages at Work in Paul's Day*
 - *Initially Restrained by Pagan Rome*
 - *To Continue Until the Return of Christ*

Who is Paul's "Man of Sin?" (Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier)

- *The Papal Dynasty of the Apostate Church of Rome*
 - *To Continue Until the Return of Christ*
 - *The apostate church, an evolution from truth to error, clearly had its genesis in the first century. And yet, this movement continues to this day. According to Paul's prophecy, it will abide, in one form or another, until the coming of Christ.*
 - *It is, of course, in vogue these days to ridicule this view of the man of sin as viewed in 2 Thessalonians 2. In response, one could hardly do better than to quote Coffman: "The identification of the papacy and its religious apparatus with Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2:3–10 was the prevailing view for more than a thousand years, a view supported by the writings and interpretations of many of the most brilliant men who ever lived on earth; and, on that account, there is no way for this writer to accept the sneers and snickers with which this interpretation is greeted by many modern commentators, as being an effective refutation of the arguments upholding it" (104).*

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Thanksgiving, Exhortation, and Prayer (2:13-17)

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴ to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Two readings exist:
 - “From the beginning” – followed by the KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NET, etc.
 - If original, this likely refers to God’s eternal plan from the beginning to save those in Christ (**Eph. 1:4-10**).
 - “As firstfruits” – followed by most modern critical Greek editions and some translations (ESV, LSB, NIV, etc.).
 - If original, this likely refers to the Thessalonians as an early portion of the harvest produced by the gospel (**Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15; James 1:18**).

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- Others reject the truth and will be condemned, “but” the Thessalonians were not included in that number.
 - These Christians were not just loved by Paul, they were “beloved by the Lord.”
- Paul felt “bound,” or obligated, to thank God because their salvation ultimately originated in God’s love, election, and gospel call (**2 Thess. 1:3; Eph. 1:3-6**).
 - God determined to save those who respond to the gospel in obedient faith, not arbitrarily save particular individuals while excluding others (**John 3:16; Acts 10:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9; etc.**).

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- God chooses people for salvation through:
 - “Sanctification by the Spirit” (**John 17:17; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:3, 7-8; Heb. 12:14**).
 - “Belief in the truth” (**Rom. 10:16-17; Col. 1:23**).
 - “The gospel call” (**Rom. 1:16, 10:14-17; Gal. 1:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:9-10**).
 - This explains how the Thessalonians became God’s chosen people. They heard, received, believed, and obeyed the gospel call (**Acts 17:1-4; 1 Thess. 1:4-6, 2:13**).

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 - “Belief in the truth” (**Rom. 10:16-17; Col. 1:23**).
 - “The gospel call” (**Rom. 1:16, 10:14-17; Gal. 1:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:9-10**).

“Here we see God’s activity and man’s responsibility. The Word of God was given through the inspiration of the Spirit and it reveals the way of sanctification. Faith is the required human response” (Mayberry, p.51).

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- Calvinists understand the order as chronological: the Spirit first regenerates or inwardly sanctifies the elect, enabling them to believe the truth.
 - The Calvinist's order:
 - Unconditional individual election → gospel's external call → irresistible inward regeneration (purification/sanctification) of the elect → faith as the inevitable result → guaranteed perseverance → final glory

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Thanksgiving, Exhortation, and Prayer (2:13-17)

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- However, the Calvinist view inverts **Rom. 10:14-17**, and ignores that is through faith in the gospel that hearts are purified and sanctified (**Acts 7:51, 15:9; John 12:48, 17:17; 2 Thess. 2:10, 13-15; Heb. 3:12-14**).
- God's order:
 - Gospel genuinely calls all, elect and non-elect alike → truth heard → hearer freely chooses to accept or reject it → if truth is accepted, it produces obedient faith → purification and sanctification through faith and truth → continued faithfulness → final glory

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- Remember:
 - God calls through the gospel (**2 Thess. 2:14**).
 - We can refuse to receive the love of the truth (**2 Thess. 2:10**).
 - Faith comes through hearing the word (**Rom. 10:17**).
 - God purifies hearts by faith (**Acts 15:9**).
 - God sanctifies through truth (**John 17:17**).
 - Believers must stand fast and hold the truth (**2 Thess. 2:15**).

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Thanksgiving, Exhortation, and Prayer (2:13-17)

¹⁵ Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

- God's calling did not eliminate the Thessalonian's responsibility to remain faithful (**1 Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:21-23**).
- Instead of being shaken by false teaching (**2 Thess. 2:2**), they needed to:
 - "Stand fast," i.e. remain firmly established in truth (**1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 1:27, 4:1**).
 - "Hold the traditions" they were taught.
 - Some traditions originate with men and, therefore, must be rejected (**Matt. 15:1-9; Col. 2:8**).
 - Some traditions were delivered by inspired men ("by word or our epistle") and, therefore, must be retained (**1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 3:6**).
 - Note that Paul's spoken and written teachings possessed equal authority.

SECOND THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

Paul's Thanksgiving, Exhortation, and Prayer (2:13-17)

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

- These verses form a prayer that God would help the Thessalonians in obeying the command to stand fast and hold to apostolic traditions.
 - Human responsibility must be joined with dependence upon divine help (**Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 13:20-21**).

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- These verses form a prayer that God would help the Thessalonians in obeying the command to stand fast and hold to apostolic traditions.
- The strength to stand firm rests upon what God has done:
 - God “has loved us.” This love is demonstrated through Christ’s sacrifice and the call to salvation (**John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8; 1 John 4:9-10**).
 - God has “given us everlasting consolation and good hope,” grounded in heaven (**Heb. 6:18-19; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-4; Tit. 2:13**).

“The element of uncertainty with the consequent disappointment ... has no place in the hope of the faithful Christian” (Lipscomb, p.104).

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 - God has “given us everlasting consolation and good hope,” grounded in heaven (**Heb. 6:18-19; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-4; Tit. 2:13**).
 - We have received these things “by grace” (**Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:4-9; Tit. 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:13**).

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- These verses form a prayer that God would help the Thessalonians in obeying the command to stand fast and hold to apostolic traditions.
- The strength to stand firm rests upon what God has done.
- The strength to stand firm rests upon what God will do:
 - “Comfort your hearts.”
 - God’s comfort should promote steadfastness (**Col. 2:1-7; 2 Eph. 3:16-17**).
 - “Establish you in every good word and work.”
 - We must be established in word (sound speech) and work (sound conduct) (**Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:16-17; Tit. 2:7-8, 14**).