

ANOTHER MYSTERY REVEALED 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

The Mystery at Work Against God's Eternal Plan

1. **The beginning of the 20th century was a high water mark for human optimism**
 - a. The belief that Human achievement & Technology would cure all disease & end all suffering
 - b. Science will SAVE us, Pharmaceutical drugs will CURE us, Psychology will HEAL us
 - c. Then the world fell into war. hundreds of thousands died in WW1 Tens of millions died WW2
 - d. Mechanical Warfare, then Chemical warfare, then Biological warfare,
 - e. Then the Concentration camps, the gulags, the killing fields, Atomic Bomb, Hydrogen Bomb.
 - f. Enough weapons to destroy the face of the earth 10x over.
 - g. The realization that Science and Technology Cannot Fix the Human Heart or explain Evil
2. **Ephesians 3 we saw the Mystery of God's Eternal Plan revealed to God's people:**
 - a. The Mystery of God's Grace: Offered in the Gospel
 - b. The Mystery of God's Love: Proven at the Cross
 - c. The Mystery of God's Kingdom: The Church
3. **But the Bible Reveals Another Mystery... at Work AGAINST God's Eternal Plan.**
 - a. A Mystery revealed so we can be aware of it and on guard against it (2 Thess. 2:1-12)

I. THE MYSTERY AT WORK AGAINST GOD'S PLAN

A. DO NOT BE TROUBLED OR DECEIVED (v.1-3a)

1. **Sometimes people jump to false conclusions...**

—Especially regarding the study of end times events.

- a) The study of End times is one of the most fascinating subjects of the Bible, but it is also shrouded in mystery...
- b) Which makes it tempting for immature teachers to exaggerate current events force them into certain verses of the Bible where they don't fit.
- c) Many false teachers made a name for themselves with end times teaching Predicting the Day the Lord will Return....

2. **But there is no need to exaggerate end time events...**

- a) When the end of the world arrives it will be interesting enough.

3. **But It was no different then as it is now...**

- a) The Christians in Thessalonica had a misunderstanding and thought the return of Christ had happened or was already happening
- b) Apparently some had quit their jobs and stopped working

4. **Paul is reassuring the church not to be troubled or deceived...**

- a) There are many things that will happen before Jesus returns to judge the world

B. THE FALLING AWAY (v.3)

1. **The Day of the Lord will not happen until the falling away happens first**

a) **Greek: apostasia. Where we get the word apostasy**

- (1) **NKJ** "falling away". **ESV**: "the rebellion." **NLT**: "a great rebellion against God"

2. Q: Is this a world-wide apostasy? Or an apostasy within the church?

- a) The warnings point to within the church: (**Acts 20:28; Mt 7:15; 1 Tim 4:1**)
- b) But it could include Both: world-wide and in the church (**2 Timothy 3:1–5**)
- c) 'Having a form of godliness': There are many who think they are "good people" and they will plead for your empathy but will harm you if you disagree w/ them

3. THERE ARE 3 BASIC INTERPRETATIONS:

- (1) This has already happened in the past and is over.
- (2) This has already begun and is still in progress and still unfolding
- (3) This is something that has not happened yet but will in the future.

—WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- (1) 1st Wrong: This is not past and over, (**v.8**) it will only end when Jesus returns
- (2) 3rd wrong: (**v.7**) Paul said this mystery was already at work in his time.
- (3) 2nd fits scripture: This has already begun and is still in progress until Jesus returns.

C. THE MAN OF SIN (v.3-4)

1. WHO IS THIS MAN OF SIN?

- a) **Some MSS 'man of sin' others 'man of lawlessness'** but the difference is the same because (1 John 3:4) 'sin is lawlessness'.
- b) **Also called 'the son of perdition' (destruction)**
- c) Some believe this is referring to one individual person:
Some Evil Genius of powerful persuasion.
- d) Some believe this is the anti-christ spoken of by John.
- e) Others believe it is not limited to only 1 person in 1 generation... but is a personification of evil, that continues in succession in every generation.

2. SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER...

a) **Judas is the only person in Bible called the son of perdition (Jn 17:12)**

- (1) And yet Judas was already dead when this letter is written.
- (2) But who entered Judas the night of the betrayal? (**Luke 22:3–4**)
- (3) This leads me to believe the son of perdition can be more than one person.

b) **John is the only NT writer to us the term 'antichrist'**

- (1) (**1 John 4:1-3**) Notice: 'the spirit of the antichrist' 'now already in the world'
- (2) (**1 Jn 2:18-19**) 'even now many antichrists have come'
—which is a caution against any hasty identification of just one person.
- (3) (**1 Jn 2:22-23**) **who is an anti-christ? Those who deny Jesus is the Christ**
Who is that? A LOT of PEOPLE! Atheists, Agnostics, Hindus, Muslims
This is SCARY there are churches today that teach that Jesus is not the son of God (Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, liberal churches)
BUT WHAT DOES JOHN CALL THEM?!

c) **An antichrist is one who stands in opposition or in competition to Christ**

"After the prophets, the false prophets; after the apostles, the false apostles; after the Christ, the anti-christ." (Chrysostom)

3. THE MAN OF SIN OPPOSES GOD—AND EXALTS HIMSELF!... (2:4)

- a) he takes his seat in the temple of God... proclaiming himself to be God!
- b) The very thing Satan wanted when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness:
 - (1) I will give you all these kingdoms of the world and their glory
 - (2) IF You Bow Down and worship me.

D. THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS (v.5-8)

1. Greek word (nomos) means 'Law'. (anomos) is 'without law', 'against law'

- a) NIV: "For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work"
- b) This same Greek word is also translated elsewhere as 'iniquity', or 'wickedness'
- c) A secret power of wickedness at work undermining Law and Order
- d) How is it secret? Because it is at work even from people who appear righteous!
- e) (Matthew 23:28) Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men,
but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

2. Lawlessness: Not just a Rejection of Law—but of God's Law (Matt 24:9–14)

- a) And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. (V.12)
- b) This is all part of the Plan—the Chaos, the Lawlessness, breeds hate, which breeds more chaos and more lawlessness and the love grows cold.

E. THE POWER BEHIND THE MYSTERY (v.9-10)

1. Is it any surprise who is behind this secret power of wickedness?

- a) The enemy, the deceiver, the tempter, the father of lies, the assassin in eden

2. The working of Satan, using 'all power' ...

- a) Counterfeit Signs, lying wonders, and demonic deception
- b) This would include the deceptive influence of occult beliefs and practices
- c) But it would have to include deception so powerful it can even deceive God's people!
(Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15)

3. The working of Satan, using 'all power' ...

F. THE PEOPLE OF THE LIE (v.11-12)

1. Notice why the people of the lie were deceived...

- a) because they did not love the truth that they might be saved.
- b) If a Person Rejects the Truth—What Else is Left? Only the Lie...

2. This is Why they Are the People of the Lie!

- a) The people of the lie love themselves more than they love the Truth
- b) They exchanged the truth of God for the lie, to worship and serve themselves rather than God.

3. God gave them over to what they wanted...

- a) They Wanted their Sin — and it is their own sin that deceives them.
- b) "The Truth sounds like hate to those who hate the Truth"
- c) They wanted to love a lie more than they wanted to Love God.

II. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US

A. THERE IS A DARK FORCE OF EVIL AT WORK IN THE WORLD

1. **The Mystery of Lawlessness was already at work then and still is today...**
 - a) Satan seeks Division and Destruction...
 - b) To Divide Marriages, Families, Churches, Communities, Societies
 - c) Strong Marriages and Families are the fabric of society...
 - d) To Destroy marriages and families leads the the break down of societies.
 - e) To Poison the minds of people against God and against the Truth
2. **The Reason the Bible warns us of this is so we would be prepared.**
 - a) Just pretending that there is no evil at work in the world is not helping us.
 - b) Use Wisdom and Discretion...
 - c) Don't just believe whatever the news says... or every Social Media Posts...
3. **'Test all things; hold fast what is good.'** (1 Thes. 5:21)
 - a) (1 John 4:1) Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

B. GOD IS IN CONTROL AND HIS VICTORY IS CERTAIN

1. Even when things seem to be out of control...

We know that God is in Control.
2. The Bible reminds us to 'be still and know' that God is in control! (Ps 46)
3. We may be in the middle of a storm—but God is with us in the storm...

and He will bring us through to the other side!

C. BE STRONG IN THE FAITH AND DON'T GIVE UP

1. There is a War for your Mind and for your Soul...
2. This is a Spiritual Battle (Ephesians 6:10–13)
3. The Struggle is Real! — But We Know Who Wins!

CONCLUSION:

“Ponder how valuable your soul must be for satan to tirelessly pursue it, and the King to lay down His own life for it.” (Anon)

4. You Have a Choice: to believe the Lie — or to Believe the Truth
5. This is the Choice before all who live on the face of the earth
6. To live by the Truth is not always easy...

“But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.” (2 Thes. 3:3)