

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

Deception is the business of Satan. Since Satan has become the ruler of this world, he has discovered that his genius is only good for deception. Satan has two basic systems of deception. One is religion and the other is revolution. Religion is designed to neutralize doctrine in the angelic conflict; revolution is designed to neutralize the Laws of Divine Establishment in the angelic conflict. In the first part of this chapter, it is Bible doctrine which is under attack. The Thessalonians were taught clearly by Paul that the Rapture would take place before the Tribulation. By placing the Rapture of the Church to occur after the beginning of the Tribulation was an attack upon dispensation. By stating that the Rapture would occur sometime within the Tribulation would be placing the dispensation of the Church within the Dispensation of Israel. By placing the Rapture after the Tribulation would be inserting within the Church Age, still an attack against the true concept of dispensation.

2 Thessalonians 2

2:1: Moreover, my brethren, we urge you with regard to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ [a reference to the Rapture] and our gathering together unto Him [at the Rapture which is the end of the Church Age],

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπὶ αὐτόν,

Why does Paul make an urgent request instead of giving a command? Because everyone must decide for himself what he is going to do about doctrine after salvation. In salvation the issue is

“what do you think of Christ”? After salvation the issue is “what do you think of doctrine”?

The Church Age is completely separate from the Age of Israel. If the Christian does not correctly understand the sequence of eschatological events, he will make some false applications regarding his spiritual life. The Thessalonians were under a special attack in this field. The attack is still going on today. There were claims in this forged epistle which was delivered to the Thessalonians that the Rapture would take place in the middle or at the end of Tribulation. These are false doctrines and blur the distinction between the Church Age and the Age of Israel.

2:2: that you should not be soon shaken in mind nor disturbed, neither by a personality [for example the Anti-Christ], nor by an [evil] policy, nor a *false doctrine* [motive] nor [forged] epistle as from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord has come [that the Tribulation had already come and would be followed by the Rapture and the 2nd Advent].

εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν, ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου.

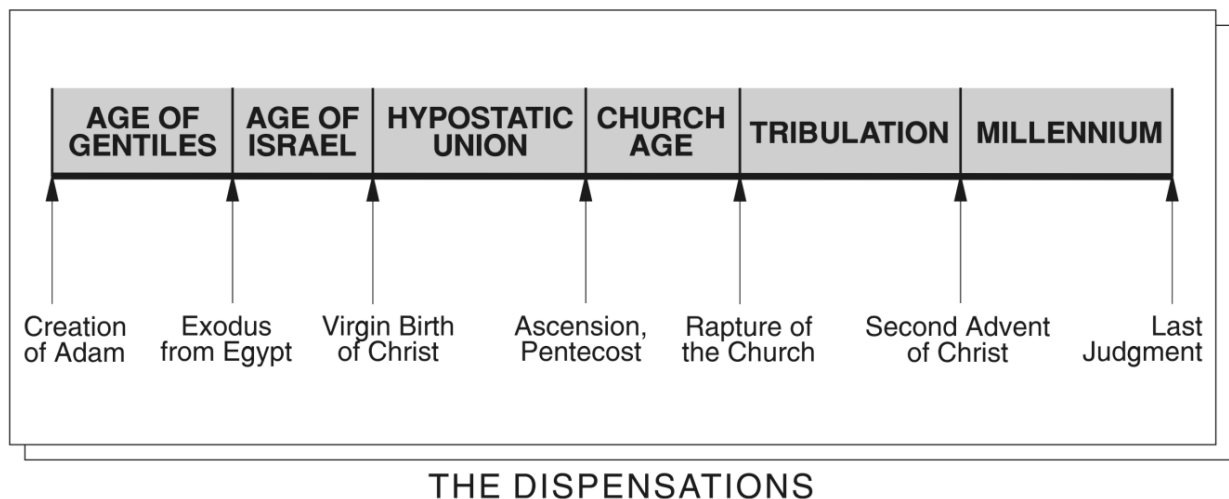
The Thessalonians had received a forged epistle as an epistle from Paul. In this forged epistle, it alleged that the Rapture would occur either in the middle of the Tribulation (Mid-Trib.) or after it (Post-Tribulation). Paul refuted these claims by making application from the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

2:3: Do not let anyone deceive you in any way since it [the Day of the Lord namely the Tribulation and the 2nd Advent] will not come unless the departure [the Rapture of the Church], and the man [the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] who is lawless

[anti-establishment] **shall be revealed, the son of perdition** [the man doomed to destruction],

μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον· ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,

The simple chart below will help you understand the true sequence of eschatological events.



In order to introduce the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire, it will be necessary to gain some knowledge of the Revived Roman Empire.

Regarding the Revived Roman Empire, the information below was taken from the booklet, Daniel Chapters One through Six, pages 58-60 by R. B. Thieme Jr.

The Revived Roman Empire

“And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the

toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay.” (Dan. 2:41)

From our viewpoint the description of the image is historical, but from Daniel 2, verses 41 through 44, we are dealing with future events. During the entire Church Age there have been and will continue to be power struggles among the nations of Western Europe. Near the end of the present dispensation the old Roman Empire will be drawn together again as a ten-nation power bloc emerges. When the Rapture of the Church takes place and the Tribulation begins, the “feet partly of iron and partly of clay” (verse 33) consolidate into the Revived Roman Empire, which shall exist during the seven years of Tribulation, the culmination of the Age of Israel.

The question always arises: Where does the United States of America fit into this picture? The answer is not in prophecy, but I believe that if this country remains a national entity, it may be reduced to the status of “clay” and as such will be subordinate to the “iron” rule of the Revived Roman Empire. Clay is malleable and cannot stand firm against the unbending qualities of iron.

Today the United States of America is a client nation to God, a center of Bible teaching, evangelism, and missionary activity. We will not, however, be a client nation in the Tribulation. Any nation, including the United States, without a foundation of Bible doctrine is easily influenced by the whims of evil. When a nation begins to decline, the collapse from within is the catalyst which eventuates in the destruction of the nation. As such we may be incorporated as one of the toes of clay in the Revived Roman Empire.

“And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. (Dan. 2:42)

“And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.” (Dan. 2:43)

Verses 42 and 43 make reference to the ten-nation confederation. The “iron” of the toes, kingdoms of the old Roman Empire, will dominate the weaker “clay” of the toes. The “seed of men” refers to the religious aspect of the Revived Roman Empire. At present, the Revived Roman Empire exists in mystery form—ecumenical religion.

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. (2 Thess. 2:7)

The “mystery of lawlessness” refers to apostate religious influences during the Church Age, all of which are under the indirect or direct rule of Satan. Satan’s religious sponsorship masks evil in a façade of good. Yet we know that faith in Christ and Bible doctrine are the only means of uplifting mankind. “He who now restrains” is the Holy Spirit who hinders or restrains evil in the world. Once the Church is resurrected, the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is terminated and the restraint is off. The mystery of lawlessness becomes a revelation.

When religion becomes an integral part of the ten-nation alliance, then the Revived Roman Empire is complete. To “combine with one another in the seed of men” depicts the fusion of religious and political entities. Revelation 17 amplifies this affiliation:

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.” (Rev. 17:1)

“The great harlot” represents satanic-sponsored religion, which is in mystery form today. With all restraint removed after the Rapture of the Church, “the great harlot” presides over a house of ten nations— the Revived Roman Empire. “Many waters” is a reference to subjugated gentile nations. “With whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.” (Rev. 17:2) The Tribulation will be the time of the most intense concentration of religion the world has ever known. Ecumenical religion will accelerate its thrust under Satan’s powerful influence (cf. Rev. 17—18). Rome will be the headquarters for worldwide “immorality,” worldwide religious activity.

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.” (Dan. 2:44)

“Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so, the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy.” (Dan. 2:45)

At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to the earth as the “stone” that was “cut out of the mountain without hands.” This is a parallel phrase to Daniel 2:34. A better translation of “stone” would be “a gigantic rock.”

Now for more information on the political rise of the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire, let’s turn to Revelation 13.

The Gentile dictator of the Revived Roman Empire (Revelation 13:1-10)

13:1. Then, I [John] saw [a vision] the beast-dictator [the gentile, bestial dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] **ascending from** [filled the void left from lack of truth] **the sea** [of nations of the old Roman Empire], **and he had ten horns** [10 nations of the Revived Roman Empire of the first half of the Tribulation], **and seven heads** [three nations had to be conquered; the remaining seven summited]; **this means** [one of the 17 different uses of the Greek word *kai*] **that on his horns** [his ten horns, representing power] **were ten crowns** [representing the original ten nation-confederation of the Revived Roman Empire], **but over his heads** [the nations of the Revived Roman Empire of the last half of the Tribulation] **the name blasphemy** [He took complete control over ecumenical religion in the middle of the Tribulation].

13:2. Furthermore, the beast [the dictator of the revived Roman Empire] **which I [John] saw was like a leopard** [his rapid conquest will be accomplished in a year or two so that he will be in complete control by the middle of the Tribulation], **and his feet were like the feet of a bear** [like the Persians who were pro Semitic, he also was initially] **and his mouth was like the mouth of a lion** [a reference to the Chaldeans who conquered the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C.]. **And the dragon** [Satan] **gave to him his power and his throne and great authority** [to be the ruler of the Revived Roman Empire and the leader of ecumenical religion, he had to be promoted by Satan and as such he is now totally Satan's man].

Documentation:

Daniel 7:1-8, "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the summary of it. (2) Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.

(3) "And four great beasts [empires] were coming up from the sea [of Nations], different from one another [an idiom for explaining that they followed each other historically]. (4) The first [the Chaldean Empire] was like a lion [speed and destructibility] and had the wings of an eagle [The Chaldeans came into prominence very quickly because they were warlike and helped to bring down the Assyrian Empire. In 605 B.C. they defeated the Egyptians at the Battle of Carchemish.]. I kept looking until its wings were plucked [Nebuchadnezzar's madness and the palace revolution], and it was lifted up from the ground [the mental recovery and restoration of Nebuchadnezzar] and made to stand on two feet like a man [Nebuchadnezzar's conversion as a believer]; a human mind also was given to it [He became very brilliant from learning God's word]. (5) And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear [the Median-Persian Empire]. And it was raised up on one side [the Persians dominated the Medes], and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth [the story of Cyrus the Great who conquered the three ribs namely the Medes, the Lydians and the Chaldeans]; and thus, they said to it [the bear], 'Arise, devour much meat!' [the expansion of the Persian Empire in 25 Years from India on the east to the Aegean Sea in the west, to the Persian Gulf in the south and Egypt to the southwest] (6) After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard [Alexander the Great and his Macedonian Empire which he conquered in 12 years], which had on its back four wings of a bird [the first wing: the conquest of Asia Minor; the second wing: the conquest of the Mediterranean world namely Cilicia, Syria, Tyre and Egypt; the third was the conquest of Persian's eastern empire including Mesopotamia; the fourth wing: Parthia, Bactria, Sogdiana, the Hindu Kush and northern India] the beast also had four heads [after the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. there were four Hellenistic Monarchies: Seleucus who ruled from India to Palestine, Ptolomy who formed the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, Cassander who ruled Macedonia and Lysimachus who set up a kingdom including Asia Minor,

Thrace and Armenia.] **and dominion was given to it** [the Hellenistic Monarchies until conquered by the Romans]. **(7) After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast** [the Roman Empire], **dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder** [of the Hellenistic Empire] **with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns** [the Revived Roman Empire]. **(8) While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts."**

13:3. Then, [I saw] one of the heads [of the historical Roman Empire at the time John wrote in 96 A.D.], **as if it had been wounded** [the bleeding to death of a nation, a reference to Alaric of the Visigoths who sacked Rome in 410 A.D.] **to the point of death** [destruction of Roman Empire in 476 A.D. when Odoacer, a German general overthrew Romulus Augustus] **nevertheless his mortal wound** [the death of old Roman Empire in 476 A.D.] **was healed** [revival of the Roman Empire in the Tribulation]. **And the entire world was amazed** [regarding the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] especially due to his ability in the field of miracles] **and followed the beast-dictator** [total admiration for this man].

13:4. Furthermore, they worshipped the dragon [Satan] **because he gave absolute power** [both power and authority] **to the beast-dictator** [to perform miracles], **also they worshipped the beast-dictator; and they said, "Who is like the beast-dictator and who is able to fight against him?"**

13:5. Furthermore, there was given to him [by Satan] **a mouth** [eloquence] **speaking arrogant doctrine** [of evil regarding people

and life] **and blasphemies** [giving out false information about God]; **also, there was given to him authority** [power] **to function** [for] **42 months** [the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation].

13:6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His person and His tabernacle [of the Testimony: Exodus 27:21; 29:4] **and those who dwell in heaven** [Jewish believers temporarily dwelling in their interim bodies in heaven].

13:7. Furthermore, power [the religious power of ecumenical religion] **was given to him** [the dictator of the revived Roman Empire] **to make war against the saints** [believers in last half of the Tribulation] **and to overcome them** [in the last half of the Tribulation]; **and authority was given to him over every tribe** [a reference to Jews in Israel and throughout the world] **and** [all the] **people** [citizens of the Revived Roman Empire] **and** [all the] **languages** [a reference to foreigners living outside the Revived Roman Empire] **and** [all the] **nations** [Gentile nations influenced by ecumenical religion].

13:8. In fact all [Jewish unbelievers in last half of Tribulation] **who live in the land** [of Israel] **will worship him** [the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire as the ruler of ecumenical religion], **everyone whose name has not been written** [as it appears in heaven for their names were blotted-out at death] **in the book of life** [the registry of everyone who has believed in Christ during their life on earth] **belonging to the Lamb** [Jesus Christ who provided His saving work on the Cross] **who has been slain** [put into operation in the Divine Decree] **from the foundation of the cosmos** [Satan's world system came into operation after mankind sinned and consequently lost rulership of the world. Jesus did not have to be slain until the fall of mankind. Although the cross was always in the Divine Decree, it was put into operation at this point].

13:9. If anyone [a special category] **has an ear** [the potential for learning Bible doctrine and functioning in the system] **let him hear.** [You will then develop a sense of destiny which includes being law abiding. If on the other hand, you should fail, then as an example of failure, you just might enter into a lifestyle of unlawful violence.]

13:10. If anyone [in contrast to the verse above, whether he be gangster, political criminal, a warlord, terrorist, mercenary, religious fanatic etc.] **leads others into captivity by unlawful use of violence** [to deprive of freedom, privacy & property], **he will go into captivity. If anyone** [same as above] **shall kill unlawfully with the sword, he must be killed by the sword** [capital punishment]. **Under these circumstances** [adverb used as an idiom] **a personal sense of destiny is the steadfastness and the doctrine belonging to the saints.**

This Gentile dictator should not be confused with the Jewish dictator of the Revived Roman Empire (Revelation 13:11-19)

13:11. Then, I saw another [of the same kind] **beast-dictator** [Jewish] **who rises to power from the land** [of Israel]; **and he had two horns** [representing his civil and religious power] **like a lamb** [a false messiah], **but he kept speaking** [eloquently] **like the dragon** [like Satan since he is demon possessed].

He is a political and religious genius (the two horns) who communicates the ideas of Satan. Genesis 49:16-18, “Dan shall rule his people [in the Tribulation] as one of the tribes of Israel. (17) Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels [Israel in the Tribulation] so that his rider falls backward [the persecution of the Jewish believers in the 2nd

half of the Tribulation]. (18) I [Jacob speaking for Jewish believers] wait for your deliverance [at the 2nd Advent], O Lord.”

13:12. In fact, he exercises [perfective present] **all the authority of the first beast-dictator** [the Gentile dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] **on his behalf** [of the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire]. **Then**, [after making the treaty with the dictator of Revived Roman Empire], **he forces the land** [the state of Israel] **and those who reside in it** [the citizens] **to worship the first beast-dictator** [of the Revived Roman Empire], **whose fatal wound** [a stroke of death: the fall of the historical Roman Empire in 476] **was healed** [the revival of the Roman Empire in the Tribulation].

He has a foreign and religious policy based on his treaty with the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. After making a treaty with the first beast, the dictator of Israel now feels strong. He is now able to defend against the Arab coalition and the King of the North. The dictator of Israel will become the head of ecumenical religion in Israel, but functions under the dictator of the revived Roman Empire.

13:13. Furthermore, he performed great signs [under the power of Satan so that the citizens of Israel will think that he is the Messiah], **for example, he may even cause fire to come down from the sky to the earth** [an illustration of his miracles] **in the presence of the people** [the Jewish citizens].

13:14. And so that he [the Jewish dictator] **might deceive the residents of the land** [of Israel], **because of the miraculous signs which were given to him** [the dictator of Israel] **in the presence of the beast-dictator** [Satan honors the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire as the leader of world ecumenical religion], **and he** [the dictator of Israel] **keeps urging the residents of the land** [of Israel] **to manufacture** [the constative aorist tense gathers into

one whole his many speeches] **an idol to that beast-dictator who had the death stroke of the sword** [the destruction of the historical Roman Empire in 476 A.D.] **and has come to life** [the Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation].

It took a miraculous event to get the Jews to abandon their traditional Judaism. (The Jews seek signs; the Greeks seek wisdom.) This urging to idolatry exposed the dictator as a false messiah. Idolatry is always related to demon possession and influence of the unbeliever and demon influence only of the believer. Idolatry amalgamates moral degeneracy with immoral degeneracy. Once the two have been amalgamated it establishes a dictatorship called organized evil.

13:15. Then, it was given to him [the Jewish dictator] **the power to provide a [demon] spirit for the idol of the beast-dictator so that the image of the beast-dictator might even speak** [the function of a ventriloquist demon], **and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast-dictator to be put to death.**

People negative to truth are easily deceived. The demon in this passage is a ventriloquist-demon, one who controls the vocal cords of an unbeliever. The voice of this demon could be thrown out from the ground or via a human. This same type of demon is associated with the pseudo gift of tongues. The ventriloquist demon used in this operation will easily deceive these Jewish unbelievers.

13:16. Furthermore, he forces [causes] **everyone, the small** [with no power] **and the great** [with power], **and the rich and the poor, and both the free and the slave in order that they** [those involved in ecumenical religion] **should provide them** [the worshippers of the beast-dictator] **a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.**

13:17. And that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark [the general identification system], **or the name of the beast-dictator** [for the leaders and clergymen in the ecumenical system] **or the number** [666] **of his name** [the number related to the computer system].

13:18. Here is wisdom [application of Biblical truth to the situation]. **He who has the ability to think let him compute the code-number of the beast-dictator, for it** [six] **is the number of mankind and his number is six hundred and sixty-six** [man deified].

Part of wisdom is to understand historical trends. Use your brain to compute the facts in order to defeat their computing computer system. Compute and determine how you will deal with this historical trend.

Six is the number of man in Scripture. Six tripled is the deifying of man in Satan's cosmic system. The deification is the ultimate arrogance of mankind. The code number 666 in the computer designates all those in the ecumenical system.

2:4: [the Son of Perdition was the antecedent] **who opposes** [the Lord Jesus Christ] **and exalts himself above every so-called god, or object of worship, so that he is installed in the Temple of God** [the Jewish Temple in the middle of the Tribulation], **proclaiming himself to be God.**

ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι, ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.

This most powerful man in all of history as a political dictator, a religious leader, as a military genius and a miracle maker would be doomed to destruction. He is called the Anti-Christ: The Greek

preposition "anti" has a dual connotation: against or instead of. The first meaning of against is the meaning for the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

He is in a state of total opposition to anything related to the Lord and the Lord's plan. He is Satan possessed and accepts the Satanic proposition rejected by Jesus Christ in the great temptation of Matthew chapter four. The offer of the kingdoms of the world will be made once more to the dictator of the revived Roman empire, the man of lawlessness in this passage. He will accept but, because of his inability to rule the kingdoms of the world under Satan, Satan will personally possess him. As a result, the man of lawlessness becomes Satan's chief agent in the world during the Tribulation.

As long as the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit operates during the Church Age the 'man of lawlessness' cannot exist and cannot be revealed. In other words, during the intensified stage of the angelic conflict God the Holy Spirit restrains Satan from ever making this offer to anyone else. So, this is an offer that Satan cannot make until the Church is removed from the earth. So, after the Rapture this restraint will be removed and 'the man of lawlessness' will be revealed.

He is opposed to everything found in the Divine Institutions such as the privacy, and self-determination of the individual, marriage, family life and nationalism. For example, since he is opposed to human freedom, he will use both his military and religious power to destroy the freedom of those who oppose him.

The Antichrist of the Revived Roman Empire in the Tribulation is one person, an unbeliever functioning under the cosmic systems. He sells himself out to the devil more than any other person. He has six titles in the Bible. He is the **Beast out of the Sea of nations** as per Revelation 13:1-8). He is also the leader of ecumenical

religion in the Tribulation as such has his statue placed in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem that he might be worshipped as god as per Matthew 24:15, “Therefore, when you see the **Detestable Idol** [the Abomination of Desolation, an idol of the image of the dictator of the revived Roman Empire being placed in the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem] which was communicated by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (let the reader who understands),” Revelation 17:1-4, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me [John], saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot [ecumenical religion of the Tribulation] who sits on many waters [multitudes of people throughout the world who have been converted to this religion], (2) with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality. (3) And he carried me away in the Spirit into a desert; and I saw a woman [ecumenical religion] sitting on [gains influence and control over a great political system] a **Scarlet Beast** [dictator of the Revived Roman Empire], full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. (4) The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,” In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, he is called “**The Son of Perdition** [the man doomed to destruction].” He is also called the “Little Horn” in Daniel 7:8, “While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another **The Little Horn**, came up among them, and three of the first horns [three nations of the Revived Roman Empire] were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts* [tremendous arrogance],” and the Prince who shall come in Daniel 9:25-26, “Know [from study] therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the command [from Artaxerxes in 445 BC] to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one [Messiah], the prince [Jesus Christ on the cross: verified in the next verse], shall be seven weeks [49 lunar years for

the construction of the walls of Jerusalem etc.], and [sequential] threescore and two weeks [434 lunar years which takes us to 30 AD;]: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. (26) And after [the seven weeks for construction] the threescore and two weeks [7 weeks plus 62 weeks equals 69 weeks] shall the Messiah be cut off [Christ will bear our sins on the cross followed by the Church Age interrupting the Age of Israel], and not for himself [but for our sins] and the people [SPQR: *Senatus Populusque Romanus*] of **The Prince Who Shall Come** [dictator of the revived Roman Empire] shall destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the temple [in August of 70 A.D.]; and the end thereof shall be with a flood [the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was swiftly executed by the Romans in A.D. 70], furthermore even unto the end [of the Jewish Age which will occur at the 2nd Advent of Christ] there shall be war; desolations are decreed.”

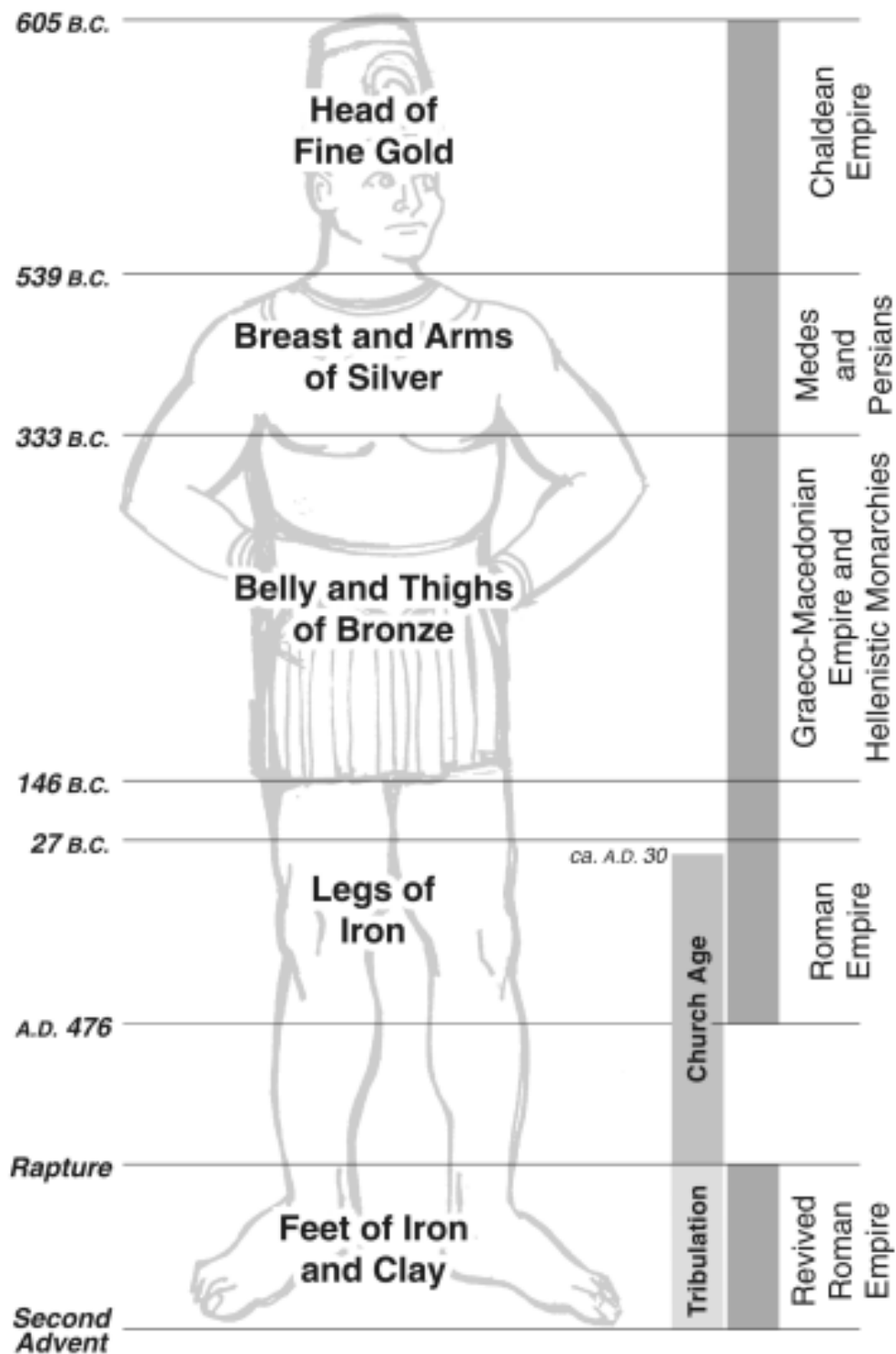
The dictator of the Revived Roman Empire is not to be confused with the antichrist of Israel in the Tribulation. This Jewish dictator is also called an antichrist because he passes himself off as Christ (using anti to mean “instead of Christ”). He also has many titles such as **Dan the Serpent** as in Genesis 49:16-18, “The false prophet,” as in Revelation 20:10, “And the Devil who had deceived them, was thrown [culminative aorist] into the Lake of Fire and *burning* sulfur, where the beast [the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] and **The False Prophet** [the false dictator and messiah of Israel] were. And they [the three just mentioned] will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” He is also called “**The Willful King**” as per Daniel 11:36-40, “And the king [the Jewish dictator] shall do according to his will [an absolute dictator]; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify [glorify] himself above every god [the true God and all the false gods of religion], furthermore, he will speak blasphemous things against the God [Lord Jesus Christ] of gods [The ancient Hebrew language didn’t have a word for dictator. So, they used the word

“god” which is used both for the false gods of religion and for dictators.]; consequently he [the Jewish dictator] shall prosper [be successful] until the indignation [Tribulation] has been completed; for that which is decreed [by God] will be accomplished [in time]. (37) Furthermore, he [the Jewish dictator] will not have any understanding of the God of his fathers, [namely the Lord Jesus Christ] nor have any desire for women [apparently homosexual], nor does he recognize any god [atheistic] for he will glorify himself above all. (38) In his status quo [as dictator of Israel], he will make a treaty with [give honor to] the dictator of fortified cities [The dictator of the revived Roman Empire is called the dictator of fortified cities because the Old Roman Empire was an empire of fortified cities.], even to a god [the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire who deifies himself] whom his fathers did not know. He will make a treaty with gold, silver, precious stones and other precious commodities. (39) Consequently, he [the dictator of Israel] will construct a system of fortifications with the help of the foreign dictator [of the Revived Roman Empire]. To those who acknowledge him [Jewish dictator as messiah] he will enrich with great wealth; he will cause them [apostate Jews] to rule over many Jews. He will also distribute the land [of Israel] for a price [to the highest bidder]. (40) And at the time of the end [of the Jewish Age], the king of the south [the pan-Arabic block will start the war] shall make war against him [the Jewish dictator]; and the king of the north shall launch a blitzkrieg attack against him [dictator of Israel] with both chariots [armored divisions] and with horsemen [mechanized infantry], and with many ships [his navy will break out of the Black Sea]; and he [king of the north] will enter into many countries, and he will both overflow [conquer] and pass through them [establishes a line of communications and supply].” He is also called “**The Beast out of the Land**” as per Revelation 13:11, “Then, I saw another [of the same kind] beast-dictator [Jewish] who rises [to power] out from the land [of Israel]; and he had two horns [representing both his civil and his religious power] like a lamb [presenting himself as Christ], but he kept

speaking [eloquently] like the dragon [since he will likely be demon possessed].”

An Overview of Ancient History from the Chaldeans to the reign of Christ in the Millennium:

Daniel 2:31-35, “You, O king were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. (32) The head of that statue was made of fine gold [Chaldean Empire], its breast and its arms of silver [Medes and Persians], its belly [Graeco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great] and its thighs of bronze [Hellenistic monarchies], (33) Its legs of iron [Roman Empire], its feet partly of iron [Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation] and partly of clay [undetermined nations]. (34) You continued looking until a stone [a large stone that is Jesus Christ] was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue [at the 2nd Advent] on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. (35) Then, the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors [baptism of fire for the unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation]; and the wind [judgment of the Second Advent] carried them away so that not a trace of them was found [they were not allowed to enter the millennial reign of Christ]. But the stone [Jesus Christ] that struck the statue became a great mountain [personal reign of Jesus Christ during the Millennium] and filled the whole earth.”



NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE

2:5: Do you not remember that when I was still face to face with you, I constantly taught you these things?

Οὐ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ἔτι ὢν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν;

Paul constantly taught the Thessalonian believers about eschatology, and still they fell for false doctrine regarding this subject. Paul had taught very clearly to the Thessalonian believers that the Church would not go through the Tribulation. All the same, they have been deceived by a false letter as coming from Paul. They were told that because they were having trouble that this was proof that they were in the Tribulation. However, Paul will remind them that it was impossible for them to be in the Tribulation. Even though Paul had taught them the proper sequence of eschatology, they became confused. So, Paul will explain again the proper eschatological sequence.

2:6: And so now you know the one who restrains [the Holy Spirit restrains evil in the Church Age] **so that he** [the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] **may be revealed in his own dispensation** [in the Tribulation and not before].

καὶ νῦν τὸ κατέχον οἶδατε, εἰς τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καιρῷ.

The Holy Spirit restrains evil and degeneracy in the Church Age and so prevents total evil in this age. The Spirit works through the Pivot of mature believers and those who have reached Pleroma status (who are receiving the fulness of blessing from God). Other persons and dictators have made deals with Satan, but they have not succeeded as this man will succeed. Even though the number of mature believers may be small, it still guarantees a certain amount of restraint on evil, degeneracy, and barbarity.

2:7: For the Mystery of Lawlessness [already people have made deals with Satan] **is already operational only he** [the Holy Spirit] **who now restrains** [will continue that ministry] **until he** [the Holy Spirit] **is taken out of the way** [at the Rapture].

τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἥδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας· μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται.

Satan has his own hand-picked shock troops in every generation of the Church Age. They are demonized to the maximum and may even at times be demon possessed to accomplish some terribly evil plan. For example, Adolf Hitler who was generally quite stupid at times was quite brilliant at other times, an indication that he may have been demon possessed during those brilliant moments.

In the Church Age, the Holy Spirit operates as a restrainer through a pivot of mature believers just as a high-pressure area in weather operates as a restrainer on bad weather. Lawlessness is already here, but it is in its mystery form and cannot be revealed to the maximum until the Tribulation. This restraining ministry in hindering evil and so ensures that the human race will not self-destruct.

Satan is defeated by both doctrine in the souls of believers, and by the Laws of Divine Establishment. Satan uses religion to make a counterattack against doctrine, and he uses political tyranny to make a counterattack against the Laws of Divine Establishment. The mystery of lawlessness deals with these two attacks.

2:8: And then [after the Rapture] **the lawless one** [dictator of the revived Roman Empire] **will be revealed, whom the Lord shall destroy with the breath of His mouth** [the least power of God] **in fact he** [the Lord Jesus Christ] **shall neutralize him by the very appearance of His coming** [2nd Advent],

καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, ὃν ὁ κύριος [Ἰησοῦς] ἀνελεῖ
τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσῃ τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς
παρουσίας αὐτοῦ,

God's power is infinitely greater than any creature power. In the Tribulation, Satan gives this dictator of the Revived Roman Empire more power than any human being has ever been able to possess. All the same, God's power is infinitely greater than any power that Satan has or any creature whom Satan bestows power. His breath alone will destroy this powerful dictator even the Lord's appearance is enough to neutralize this evil individual.

2:9: [The dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] **whose presence** [in history] **shall be according to the modus operandi of Satan with all power and by means of supernatural signs** [extra natural phenomena in the spiritual realm like healing] **even lying wonders** [propaganda].

οὗ ἐστὶν ἡ παρουσία κατὰ ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει
καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους

How does one impress the masses? All kinds of people like supernatural wonders and through these, one receives the approbation of the masses. This dictator's military genius will not impress the masses nor his religious organizational ability, nor his political ability. Although people disagree about many things, most people are interested in miracles. The miracle maker always gets the attention and approbation of the majority and so it will be with this dictator. This approbation and power will be supported by maximum use of propaganda.

The dictator of the Revived Roman Empire will be a criminal of criminals.

Criminality:

All criminality is acquired through arrogance. No one is born with a genetic tendency toward crime. It is all a matter of arrogance; e.g., authority arrogance, mental attitude arrogance, self-righteous arrogance, sexual arrogance, the arrogance of unhappiness, and above all, psychopathic arrogance. All criminals are such because of their own volition, because they have made a decision to be a criminal. Environment is not the issue in criminality. The environment does not mold the criminal, rather the criminal molds the environment. Honor and integrity can belong to all, not just to one social caste. There may be 8 siblings from a very poor home. Seven become wonderful responsible citizens while one becomes a criminal. Criminals are criminals not because of their environment, but because they will to be so.

Criminality actually begins with rejection of authority in the home. Rejection of parental authority eventually results in the rejection of all legitimate authority including God's Laws of Establishment, and therefore the criminal is totally disoriented to life. He seeks to superimpose his authority on society. In arrogance, he gives lip service to the authority he encounters, but in his soul, he despises any and all authority except his own. A law-abiding citizen may be irresponsible without being a criminal, but all criminals are irresponsible all the time.

The criminal lives inside the cosmic system. He is totally preoccupied with himself. He is hypersensitive about himself and insensitive toward others. Strangely enough, he is very self-righteous, and filled with self-justification regarding his criminal deeds. For example, it happens many times in prison riots during which criminals will kill other criminals. When asked why they killed another criminal, they will answer because the other criminal deserved to die. He raped and killed children whereas I merely raped and killed adults for I would never touch a child.

The criminal is a bored person. He wants excitement and proof of his power. In fact, the criminal's desire for excitement is so great that he becomes jaded without constant stimulation from excitement. To the criminal, living without excitement is a put-down. Therefore, the criminal requires constant stimulation related to his crimes, sex, torture, alcohol, or drugs, making others afraid of him. Eventually, only extreme criminal activity related to torture, rape, and murder is satisfactory as an antidote to his boredom.

All liars are not criminals, but all criminals are liars. For the criminal, lying is a way of life. Therefore, the criminal becomes a pathological liar. Habitual deceit and lying is the criminal's total disregard for the truth in any form. Lying is the criminal's standard way of dealing with the world, a part of criminal manipulation.

The criminal is saturated with a lust pattern of arrogance. He has sexual lust, killer lust, power lust, approbation lust, money lust, stimulation lust requiring extensive use of drugs or alcohol, cruelty lust from which comes torture and abuse of others, as well as homicide. From his arrogant preoccupation with self, the criminal is involved in a lust pattern from which it is almost impossible to break away.

2:10: and by means of all deception of unrighteousness [This dictator is a pathological liar who has a ministry of disinformation and will deceive both unbelievers and some believers] **to those who are being destroyed** [ruined: If you do not possess truth, you will be deceived, ruined and destroyed.] **because they did not receive the love for the truth** [These unbelievers reject God at God Consciousness or at Gospel hearing or both; believers reject truth as related to their spiritual lives], **in order that they might be delivered** [from delusion, from destruction, from catastrophe].

καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, ἀνθ' ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἐδέξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτούς.

Ephesians 4:17-19 says roughly the same thing. “Therefore, I communicate this and because of the Lord, I insist that you no longer walk [have a lifestyle] even as the gentile's walk in the vacuum of their thinking [Because the unbeliever has very little truth in his soul, he cannot defend against false concepts], (18) Having been darkened [by a lack of light (truth)] in their understanding and having been alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them [in their souls], because of the hardness [callousness, scar tissue] of their hearts [of the mentality of their souls]. (19) because they having become calloused by scar tissue, and they have given themselves over to licentiousness [lasciviousness, debauchery, unrestrained sinfulness] resulting in the practice of every kind of immorality and with greediness and insatiable lust [there is never enough],”

In summary, if one rejects the truth, he will believe the lie.

2:11: And so, for this reason, God will send them [unbelievers of the Tribulation] **the modus operandi of delusion** [from black-out and scar tissue of the soul; strong delusion among the masses produces a power to be exploited by demagogues] **so that they should believe the lie** [the propaganda of the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire will take advantage of the strong delusion of the masses],

καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει,

A person is not born with strong delusion. Strong delusion begins with rejecting truth at God-consciousness or gospel hearing or both. Once a person rejects truth at one of these points, he will begin to believe all the lies related to Satan's Cosmic System.

Furthermore, he will live his life under the arrogance skills namely:

1. Self-justification or rationalizing away one's sins and evil;
2. Self-deception or lying to self;
3. Self-absorption, totally involved in mental sins

Evil reaches its peak in the Tribulation. In human history, many people accept the lies of the Cosmic System. However, it will reach its climax in the Tribulation where the entire western European civilization and other religious adherence all over the world will live under the active energy of false opinion and lies of Satan's system. During the entire course of the Tribulation and during the influence of ecumenical religion, these people will believe at every point whatever false doctrine emanates from the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire and his ecumenical religion.

2:12: in order that they all might be judged [a reference to the Baptism of Fire, and the final judgment to the Lake of Fire] **who would not believe the truth** [starting at God-consciousness and with gospel-hearing], **but have taken pleasure in evil** [wrongdoing, deceitfulness, injustice, and unrighteousness because they had absolutely no integrity].

ἵνα κριθῶσιν πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλὰ εὐδοκήσαντες τῇ ἀδικίᾳ.

2:13: But we are always obligated to give thanks to God concerning you [advancing believers in Thessalonica], **brethren having been loved by the Lord, because from the beginning, God chose you for salvation by means of sanctification** [a reference to Positional Sanctification] **by the Spirit** [a reference to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit] **and faith in truth** [gospel information],

Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου, ὅτι εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας,

2:14: for which He called you by our gospel that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ [Jesus Christ obtained glory via the execution of the Prototype Spiritual life; we can obtain a similar glory by the execution of the Operational Spiritual Life. God the Father had not only capitalized the humanity of Christ but all Church Age believers]

εἰς ὃ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν, εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

A brief on the Glory of God:

The glory of God refers to the sum total of His divine essence or to some part of divine essence. The Greek word *doxa* means brightness, radiance, splendor, magnificence, fame, renown, honor, or glory. The Hebrew word *kavod* means honor, glory, riches, nobility, splendor, and majesty. Glory always has the connotation of honor inherent in a person, distinction, greatness, renown, fame, nobility, or majesty.

Glory is used for the attributes of God in total or in part. There is a point at which we see the manifestation of God's glory. Deuteronomy 5:24, "Behold, the Lord our God has shown us [Moses and others] His glory [with emphasis on his integrity] and His greatness." You cannot see the greatness of God until you can see the glory of God. Seeing the glory of God is seeing the integrity of God through pertinent Bible doctrine. A few verses on the glory of God are as follows:

Romans 3:23 says that to fall short of the glory of God is to fall short of His integrity, "for all have sinned [true at the point of

receiving Adam's Original Sin at birth] and fallen short of the glory of God [the righteousness of God demands perfect righteousness which demand can only be obeyed by receiving imputed righteousness at salvation].

Ephesians 1:17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory [God's attributes provide great wisdom via His plan] may give you a spirit of wisdom even from the source of revelation by means of metabolized knowledge from Him."

Glory is used for the indwelling of Christ and its implications. Colossians 1:27, "To whom the God decreed to make known, what is the wealth of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the confidence of glory." We have Jesus Christ indwelling which is the guarantee that Jesus Christ as the Escrow Officer will transfer to the believer at spiritual maturity, Escrow Blessings.

Glory is used to describe the maturity of the believer. Mature believers form the basis for the recognition of God's glory. Ephesians 1:5-6, "By means of love, He has predestined us for the purpose of adoption as adult sons to Himself [God the Father] through Christ Jesus our Lord according to the grace purpose of His will [the sovereignty of God always functions graciously]. (6) To the praise of the glory with reference to his grace [genitive of reference: grace is part of God's glory] which grace he freely bestowed on us [all Church Age believers] in the beloved (in the Lord Jesus Christ; a reference to Positional Truth)"

The riches of blessing from the glory of God: Eph 1:16-18, "In order that He might give you according to the riches from His glory [the distribution of Escrow Blessings], to become strong by means of power through His Spirit with reference to the inner man. (17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation concerning Him

through metabolized doctrine. (18) I also pray that your understanding [eyes] in the right lobe of the soul be enlightened; that you may know, what is the absolute confidence of His calling [We heard the gospel and responded to it], and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance [Escrow Blessings in time and eternity] for the saints.”

Philippians 4:19, “Now my God shall fill up the deficiency of all your needs [a reference to the Ten Problem Solving Devices] according to the standard of His riches in glory by means of Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 1:7-8, “that the testing [for approval] of your faith [faith rest drill under suffering], of greater value than gold which is perishable [spiritual assets do not perish], even though tested through fire [tests associated with the level of one’s spiritual growth] may be found [having passed the tests] to result in commendation and glory and honor [rewards] at the revelation of Jesus Christ [a reference to the Rapture]; (8). and though you have not seen Him, you love *Him* [occupation with Christ], and though you do not see Him now, but believe [faith perception to maintain your love], you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible having received glory [from the execution of God’s plan].”

2:15: Therefore, my brethren, stand fast [under pressure] **and hold the teachings which you have been taught, whether by instruction** [face to face] **or by our letter** [non-face to face].

ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ὥς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι’ ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

Is face to face necessary? Paul taught both face to face and non-face to face and both were effective.

Assembling for Learning the Word

Hebrews 10:25. Do not forsake [the imperatival participle] the assembling of yourselves *together*, as is the habit of certain ones, but for the purpose of encouragement [the telic participle], even so much the more, as you see the day [Rapture] approaching.

μὴ ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, καθὼς ἔθος τιςίν, ἀλλὰ παρακαλοῦντες, καὶ τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον ὅσῳ βλέπετε ἐγγίζουσιν [present active participle feminine accusative singular] τὴν ἡμέραν.

This verse states only one purpose for assembling namely to be encouraged. (The two words ‘one another’ are not found in the Greek of this verse. This why the ‘New American Standard Bible’ puts these two words in italics.) If the Christian has an ounce of doctrine in his soul, he knows that the only true, meaningful, and lasting encouragement comes from God’s truth metabolized in the soul, and when there occurs a need for encouragement, the Holy Spirit will pull out of one’s memory center that truth necessary for encouragement.

Believers should not be forced to assemble in a particular location in order to provide opportunity for the function of spiritual gifts. Believers should assemble freely to learn God’s word and as a result, many spiritual gifts may function in that assembly. The assembly of believers cannot be mandated by Christian members. In the Divine Decree, God knew that there would be a group of believers in a certain location and so provided the necessary spiritual gifts. These believers may form a church and various spiritual gifts would then have an opportunity to function within that local church. However, if that should not occur, then the Lord would provide opportunity in most cases for your spiritual gift to function regardless of an assembly. For example, if someone is

prepared with the gift of pastor-teacher, but there is no congregation available, he may become a missionary or a seminary professor.

Even so, some contend that Christians must attend a local church to support the group and encourage the functioning of spiritual gifts. The argument goes like this, “We need a large church to support many spiritual gifts, many deacons etc. so let’s force all to attend under the same roof.” An interesting idea, but not found in Scripture. Again, the Lord adjusts the spiritual gifts to fit the size of the group assembling. Furthermore, the size of the group and the number of spiritual gifts and how they should assemble is the Lord’s responsibility, and I am reasonably sure that He can handle this task. For example, certain number of believers in a specific local church assemble to listen to the teaching of their pastor. Others in that same local may choose to listen to that same pastor in the confines of their own homes via recorded messages for one reason or another.

Regarding assemblies, the larger the group, the more the need for a variety of spiritual gifts; the smaller the group, the less need for a lot of spiritual gifts. For example, if a family of five is meeting in their home in compliance with the verse above, they would not need a board of deacons. (The purpose of having administration in the first place is to allow the pastor time to study and prepare his lessons. So, if a family or two are meeting in a home and listening to a pastor by MP3s, DVDs or through some other media, then obviously the need for deacons is a moot point.) If on the other hand, there is a congregation of 1000 members, it will need a large administrative organization.

Must Christians assemble in an ecclesiastical structure called a church? Well, in the first two hundred years of the church age there were no churches. Generally, believers met in homes to learn the word and to worship. The church is a classroom of Christians

with a professor called a pastor or minister. The classroom can take on many different forms. So, it doesn't make any difference whether the pastor teaches in a home, office building or an ecclesiastical structure. The key is not the type of building, but the qualification of the pastor.

What causes spiritual growth? The assembling in a church, a home or some type of building must include a qualified pastor. Through the accurate teaching of the pastor, the congregation comes to accept his authority. If a member of the congregation accepts the pastor's authority and listens consistently, he can grow spiritually. How far a member is seated from the minister is not the main point. He may be seated fifteen feet away from the pastor, or he may be seated in his home ten thousand miles from the pastor, it makes no difference. The point is does he accept his pastor's authority and does he listen consistently to him.

The pastor can communicate to his congregation through different medias such as: face to face communication, written material, audio, video, radio, television and online. Paul and John for example, communicated to many churches through written material. So, as long as the Christian accepts the authority of a qualified communicator, he can grow. I for example, lived most of my adult spiritual life thousands of miles away from my pastor even so, I grew all the same.

One does not have to attend a church in the same geographical area of his residence. In many geographical areas there are no pastors qualified to teach and explain the spiritual life. If a Christian had to attend a Church in such a local area, he would have no hope of spiritual growth. For example, what if you were attending a church in the city of Pusan, South Korea under the ministry of a wonderful minister. Suddenly, you became very sick and are taken to a hospital in Seoul and are told that you will be there for at least 6 months. Let's say that you have a choice of either attending the

chapel services in the hospital or receive Biblical instruction online from your pastor in Pusan. Let's assume that the minister conducting the chapel service in the hospital knows nothing about the spiritual life and thus listening to his teaching would be a total waste of time. What should you do? Should you attend the chapel services in the hospital and destroy your spiritual life, or should you listen to your pastor's online-ministry and continue to grow spiritually?

What if one had to work in a foreign country where there were no pastors. Obviously, one would have to listen to a pastor from another country by some means other than face to face. If God would not permit Biblical communication through various ways, then this believer living in a foreign land would have no hope of advancing in his spiritual life. However, the method by which a pastor communicates to his congregation is not limited to face to face. Therefore, a man and his family living in a foreign land would have to assemble in their home and learn from their pastor through such means as the written page, MP3s, DVDs or some other type of media. If the children are too young to listen to the pastor, then the parents would be responsible to break down the material and communicate it to the little ones in an interesting and enjoyable way.

The assembly of believers in a church is for the purpose of perception, and metabolization. This must be paramount. Friendship and social life with other believers are optional choices, but never mandatory. This passage is usually misunderstood because two words have been added to many translations that are not in the original language. The Greek does not say that you should assemble to encourage one another. The words *one another* do not exist in the Greek. The Greek word 'parakaleo' is a telic participle and should be translated "for the purpose of encouragement". The Telic Participle gives the purpose for the action of the main verb which is "to assemble". Why do we

assemble? We assemble to be encouraged from hearing, learning and applying God's word.

It is true that sometimes social life with other believers can be encouraging, but it is not the source of encouragement. Occasionally, a believer may associate with a mature believer and be encouraged by that believer because the mature believer expresses divine viewpoint. It is always divine thinking and expression that is encouraging, not social life with believers.

We assemble to learn the Word and develop social life with God. On the other hand, social life with Christians many times distracts believers from the spiritual life and can be counterproductive for the following reasons:

1. Many times, Christians establish wrong priorities in the Christian life through the influence of ignorant, and confused reversionistic Christians. If you associate with Christians who are ignorant of God's plan, they will affect you with their ignorance. These same believers are controlled by their sin natures and so will have a negative influence on you.

2. Many believers are distracted from learning and applying Bible doctrine through preoccupation with friendships, romance, and people in general. A good relationship with God must be established before one can have a good relationship with people. Unfortunately, people who are preoccupied with people never develop a good relationship with God.

3. If you associate with legalistic believers (believers adhering to a pseudo spirituality), you must either follow their legalism or be condemned by them. If you associate with believers who claim that the spiritual life is a series of "don't" such as: don't drink, smoke, dance or go to movie theaters, then you either must accept this system of pseudo spirituality or be in conflict with such

believers. In either case, this association will probably place you out of fellowship.

4. If you associate with antinomian Christians, you will likely become antinomian namely if you associate with those who consistently drink heavily, fornicate or are involved in criminality, then you also will be influenced by this type of behavior. The type of people we associate with will have an influence on us. Can you put a hot coal in your pocket and not get burned?

5. Some Christians use other Christians as a means of advancing themselves in business or in a profession. In other words, they attend a church where there are influential believers who can help them in their profession or business. These believers are functioning under the lust of inordinate ambition and competition. Obviously, social life with these believers would be terrible.

6. Many Christians substitute social life with believers for fellowship with God. True Christian fellowship is fellowship with God, not with people. If you have many Christian friends and perform many acts of Christian service with them, but if you do not love God, you are nothing and you accomplish nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Generally, when we sit down in some location to learn God's word, we do so with other Christians. That is what this passage is saying. However, having family members or others sit around you as you learn the Word does not contribute to your spiritual growth. Whether you sit in your home with family members to listen to your pastor on television or on radio or some other media, or you attend a large church and are surrounded by a thousand other believers makes no difference. People cannot cause one to grow spiritually; it is the message that causes spiritual growth.

Some Christians think that walking into a church automatically makes them spiritual. If a believer attends a church where the pastor is totally ignorant of the spiritual life, that believer cannot learn the spiritual life. Worse yet since that pastor does not understand the spiritual life, he will teach a pseudo spiritual life. In effect by attending that church, the Christian goes backward in his spiritual life.

If a person should study engineering under a professor who is totally ignorant of correct principles and concepts of engineering, the student will learn false information about engineering. Before the student was just ignorant, but now he is not only ignorant of true principles and concepts of engineering, but in addition to that, he has acquired false principles and concepts. He is worse than he was before. Now, he is not only ignorant, but also arrogant. He thinks he understands engineering, and therefore will not even listen to a good professor. This is what happens to Christians when they attend a church where the pastor is ignorant regarding the spiritual life. They think they understand the spiritual life; they think they are growing spiritually, but in reality, they have gone backwards in their spiritual life and have become very arrogant.

This passage is not commanding Christians to attend the nearest geographical Church building where the pastor is allegedly teaching the Word. This passage is commanding all believers to learn the Word of God consistently from a qualified pastor, a qualified spiritual professor. “But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Growth does not come through interaction with other believers. Growth does not come through sitting next to another believer in a church. “So, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the communicative word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The spiritual life is not developed through seeing your pastor in a local church, but rather through hearing his message. Your faith is not increased through social life

with other Christians, rather through hearing the accurate message of your pastor.

2:16: Now, may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself [the source of precedence for the Christian way of life], **and God, our Father who has loved us** [the divine initiative of antecedent grace] **and has given us everlasting comfort** [through the Problem-Solving Devices] **and intrinsic good confidence in the sphere of grace,**

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι,

Jesus Christ in the Proto-spiritual life established precedence which was prophesized in Isaiah 11:2.

The seven spirits are titles related to the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit first to the humanity of Christ and then to the Church Age believers. These 7 titles are found in Isaiah 11:2 and are as follows:

1. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him (The Holy Spirit's power given to Jesus at his birth)
2. The Spirit of wisdom (wisdom extrapolated from truth and applied to people, circumstances, sufferings etc.)
3. The Spirit of perception (the means of learning doctrine)
4. The Spirit of counsel (the Spirit counsels through metabolized doctrine)
5. The Spirit of strength (the Spirit produces strength in the soul)
6. The Spirit of knowledge (the Spirit, the teacher of divine knowledge)
7. The Spirit who provides respect for the Lord [a reference to God the Father].

2:17: comfort your hearts [from the circulation of doctrine in the seven compartments of the stream of consciousness] **and strengthen you in all production** [emphasizes the creation of the invisible hero with invisible impact in the Church Age] **and intrinsic good doctrine** [doctrine cannot be separated from production].

παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίξαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.

A few points:

1. Doctrine circulating in the Stream of Consciousness must precede production in the Christian way of life.
2. Production minus doctrine equals dead works and evil.
3. Evil includes Christian activism, social engineering, civil disobedience, the intrusion into the privacy of the individual and the destruction of freedom.

Doctrine in the Soul precedes Production: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

3:16. All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness [virtue],

“All Scripture” refers to the entire canon both the New and the Old Testament. The Greek word “theopneustos” means “God-breathed.” Breathing includes both inhale and exhale. The expression “God-breathed” tells us how God has revealed his plan through human writers. The inhale was God the Holy Spirit revealing to the writers of Scripture the message which he wanted written in the Bible. The exhale was the writing of the canon under the control of the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture that without waving [changing] their human intelligence, their individuality, their personal feeling or any other factor of human expression, his complete and coherent message was recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture; the very words [each word] bearing [having] the authority of divine authorship.

All Scripture is profitable for teaching. The Greek word for teaching is “didaskalia”. Teaching (didaskalia) is done by the one with the gift of teaching. After the departure of the apostles who possessed the gift of teaching, only pastors (ministers) are authorized to teach the Word of God. Only those with the gift of pastor-teacher (poimen- didaskalos) (Ephesians 4:11) are approved by God to teach adult Christians. This teaching is always to a group, never one person teaching another person individually.

Teaching to a group rather than to individuals helps to maintain privacy among believers. Actually, three things must occur in a local church in order to provide maximum privacy. First, Christians in a local church should never tell other believers their sins. Second, gossiping must be prohibited and third the pastor must teach his congregation as a group.

The pastor has a spiritual gift to teach a group. He teaches all the adults in the church while the children are being taught elsewhere. It is the pastor’s responsibility to provide sufficient food each week for his adult members that they might grow spiritually. We mention this because today there is a false concept called “discipleship.” Under this concept, certain “so called mature believers” are assigned to teach new Christians. This is a violation of the spiritual gift of “Pastor-Teacher” for only this spiritual gift is authorized in the teaching of adults. God never authorized a believer without the spiritual gift of communication to teach other adults. A new Christian needs to learn the spiritual life from a

qualified pastor. A qualified pastor must possess several assets (qualifications). He must of course possess the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. Second, he must be an adult believer or even better a mature believer which implies that he will have a good understanding of the spiritual life and sufficient humility to handle his responsibility correctly. Finally, he must either know the original languages well or get the information from another pastor who is an expert in the original languages.

In discipleship, there is always some unqualified Christian attempting to teach another the spiritual life. This is the blind (unauthorized and unqualified) leading the blind. Even a pastor is not authorized to teach Christians individually; yet, these people have the audacity not only to circumvent the authority of the pastor, but also to violate the privacy of the believer-priest by teaching to individuals.

Bible doctrine taught to the congregation is profitable for *reproof*. The Christian's motivation, thinking, decisions and actions may be incorrect. As he hears the word of God being taught by his pastor, the Word rebukes him. If the Christian recognizes his error, he has the chance to make the necessary *corrections*. You see, as the believer learns the Word of God, a mirror is formed in his soul. To the extent that this mirror is formed to that extent the believer can see himself as he really is. This helps him to see the errors (arrogance) in his thinking, motivation, decisions and actions. At that point he has the opportunity to make changes and to advance spiritually.

Step by step the Christian goes from false thinking, motivation, decisions, and actions to correct thinking etc. When the Christian fails to make the needed corrections, God administers punishment. If the Christian receives this punishment in humility, he will benefit from the punishment and correct his sinful thoughts and behavior. In this way, his experience becomes more righteous; he

is *trained in righteousness* by God. The righteous Christian eagerly desires to learn more and more about God. The righteous Christian obeys God and all of his mandates. Thus, the righteous believer is both humble and mature.

2 Timothy 3:17. that the man of God might be proficient [capable], having been well equipped [prepared] for every good work [Christian service].

The only Christian who is qualified (equipped) for Christian service is the believer who has advanced into the adult stage of experiential righteousness (personal love for God, impersonal love for all humanity, shares the happiness of God and is occupied with Christ). In this passage verse sixteen precedes verse seventeen, spiritual preparation precedes service. Verse 17 is a result of verse 16!

Written by Claude M. Klein (Max)
Pastor of Grace Bible Church of Corpus Christi, TX
Contact: curlymaxk@hotmail.com

Based on the scholarly work of R.B. Thieme Jr.

I recommend downloading 'THIEME'S BIBLE DOCTRINE DICTIONARY' from this website: rbthieme.org