

2 Thessalonians 2:2 Commentary

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to commentary

- 2 Thessalonians 2:1
- 2 Thessalonians 2:2
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- 2 Thessalonians 2:4
- 2 Thessalonians 2:5
- 2 Thessalonians 2:6
- 2 Thessalonians 2:7
- 2 Thessalonians 2:8
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Thessalonians 2:11
- 2 Thessalonians 2:12
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- 2 Thessalonians 2:14
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15
- 2 Thessalonians 2:16
- 2 Thessalonians 2:17

HE HAS NOT YET COME
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another [Overview Chart - 2 Thessalonians](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

COMPARISON OF 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

1 THESSALONIANS	2 THESSALONIANS
Addresses how the Thessalonians were evangelized as they received the Word of God	Addresses how the Thessalonians are being edified, noting their progress in faith, love, and patience
The imminency and importance of the Lord's return is emphasized	Misunderstandings about the Lord's return are corrected
The saints are comforted and encouraged	The saints are assured of God's judgment on His enemies
Paul is concerned with the church and its hope of the rapture (meeting Christ in the air)	Paul is concerned with Satan, the man of sin (Antichrist) and their destruction at the revelation (return of Christ to the earth)
Contains the outstanding passage on the rapture of the saints in 4:13–18	Contains the outstanding passage concerning the day of the Lord in 2:1–12

2 Thessalonians 2:2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. (NAS 95)

dia logou mete di epistles os di hemon, os hoti enesteken (3SRAI) e hemera to kuriou:

KJV That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ (**Not the best translation**) is at hand.

ESV not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

NET not to be easily shaken from your composure or disturbed by any kind of spirit or message or letter allegedly from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here.

NIV not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

NJB please do not be too easily thrown into confusion or alarmed by any manifestation of the Spirit or any statement or any letter claiming to come from us, suggesting that the Day of the Lord has already arrived.

NLT Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us.

YLT that ye be not quickly shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither through spirit, neither through word, neither through letters as through us, as that the day of Christ hath arrived

- **Spirit:** Dt 13:1-5 Jer 23:25-27 Mic 2:11 Mt 24:4,5,24 2Pe 2:1-3 1Jn 4:1,2 Rev 19:20
- **Letter:** 1Th 4:15 2Pe 3:4-8
- **Shaken:** Isa 7:2 8:12,13 26:3 Mt 24:6 Mk 13:7 Lu 21:9,19 John 14:1,27 Ac 20:23,24 Eph 5:6 1Th 3:3

The End of the World
(The Great Day of His Wrath)
John Martin

SAINTS AT THESSALONICA DECEIVED AND DISTURBED

That (purpose clause) - The aim or purpose of the **request** (2Th 2:1) is now stated.

Quickly means rapidly, swiftly, with little or no delay, promptly. Paul's point is that they are reacting hastily and rashly to the false teaching, not giving consideration to the truths Paul had previously taught them. While God's truth is always stabilizing, it is not able to exert this effect if it is not continually recalled to one's mind. We tend to forget as exemplified by memorizing a verse on the first of the month and not reviewing it, so that by the end of the month it is almost entirely only a vague recollection (speaking from personal experience).

In his letter to the Galatians Paul uses **tacheos** with a similar sense of responding too hastily to false teaching without pausing to consider the truth - "I am amazed that you are so **quickly** deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different Gospel." (Gal 1:6)

As **Warren Wiersbe** reminds us "The purpose of Bible prophecy is not for us to make a **calendar**, but to build **character**." Paul emphasized this fact in both of his Thessalonian letters, and our Lord warned us not to set dates for His coming (Mt 24:36, 42). *Date-setters* are usually *upsetters*, and that is exactly what happened in the Thessalonian assembly. Someone had deceived the believers into thinking they were already living in the Day of the Lord." (The Bible exposition commentary)

John Phillips on **quickly** - The subversion of the Thessalonians had been done swiftly. Satan does not let any grass grow under his feet. No sooner is he checked by Paul's first epistle, in which the whole rapture question is spelled out, than he counters with another error. (Exploring 2 Thessalonians)

Quickly (5030) (**tacheos** from **tachus** = quick, swift, soon) is an adverb that is used (1) to qualify an action = quickly, at once, without delay, soon (Lk 14:21, 15:22, Jn 11:31). (2) To qualify time focusing on the brevity of the time rather than the speed of the activity = soon (1Cor 4:19, Php 2:19, 24, 2Ti 4:9).

Uses - "Go out at **once** into the streets..." = Lk 14:21; "Sit down **quickly**" = Lk 16:6; "Mary got up **quickly**" = Jn 11:31; "I will come to you **soon**" = 1Cor 4:19; "I am amazed that you are so **quickly** deserting" = Gal 1:6; "to send Timothy to you **shortly**" = Php 2:19; "I myself also will be coming **shortly**" = Php 2:24; "**quickly** shaken" = 2Th 2:2; "Do not lay hands upon anyone too **hastily**" = 1Ti 5:22; "Make every effort to come to me **soon**." = 2Ti 4:9.

Soon means after a short time, in a moment, before long, in the near future, in a little while.

Liddell-Scott - of motion, swift, fleet; of thought and purpose, quick, hasty; of actions, events, etc., rapid, sudden

Tacheos 10x in 10v. **NAS** Usage: hastily(1), once(1), quickly(4), shortly(2), soon(2). - Lk. 14:21; 16:6; Jn. 11:31; 13:27; 20:4; Acts 17:15; 1 Co. 4:19; Gal. 1:6; Phil. 2:19, 24; 2Th 2:2; 1Ti 5:22; 2Ti 4:9; Heb. 13:19, 23

Tacheos 9x in the **Septuagint** - Jdg. 9:48; 2Sa 17:18, 21; 2Ki 1:11 ("Come down **quickly**"); Pr. 25:8; Eccl. 4:12 ("A cord of three *strands* is not **quickly** torn apart."); Isa. 8:3; Jer. 50:44; Da 2:16; Joel 3:4 ("if you do recompense Me, swiftly and **speedily** I will return your recompense on your head.");

Henry Alford on **quickly shaken** - soon and with small reason

Not be quickly shaken - "Not to drift storm-tossed from your mental moorings." (Way Translation) Ray Stedman adds that literally Paul is saying "Don't be shaken out of your wits by what's happening."

Warren Wiersbe suggests that the false teaching caused the saints to begin to question what Paul had previously taught asking "Had God changed His program? Had not Paul promised them deliverance from the Tribulation? (see 1Th 1:10; 5:9). To calm their hearts and stabilize their faith, Paul explained that they were not in the Day of the Lord. The reason was simple: that Day could not arrive till certain other events had taken place. Paul then stated for them the prophetic events that make up God's timetable." (Ibid)

Ray Stedman - One post-tribulational commentator says that what was going on was "wild anticipation of the immediate return of Christ." But the words do not mean that! The phrase literally says, "you were shaken out of your mind." We would say they were driven out of their wits; they were (in the vernacular) "all shook up!"....They were not excited and jazzed about the coming of the Lord. Rather they were scared out of their minds! It was sweaty palms and white knuckles all the way! ([Ref](#))

Shaken (agitated) ([4531](#))(**saleuo**) means to be tossed violently to and fro like a stormy wind (especially of the waves agitated by a storm) (Lk 7:24 = "A reed shaken by the wind?"; "a reed shaken by the wind" = Mt 11:7; "the powers of the heavens will be shaken" = Mt 24:29; when the Spirit came to the prayer meeting "the place...was shaken" = Acts 4:31; Jews were "agitating...the crowds" = Acts 17:13). **Saleuo** is a picturesque verb used to describe shaking of the foundations of the prison by an earthquake (Acts 16:26). In secular Greek **saleuo** conveyed the sense "to move away from," as of a ship at anchor slipping its mooring in the midst of a tempest. "That is what Satan always tries to do-move us away from sound doctrine and get us to drag our anchor. Everything else follows from that." (J. Phillips) Thus **saleuo** presents a vivid word picture of the Thessalonian saints being tossed about by false teaching regarding the coming of the Day of the Lord.

Hiebert observes that "**passive voice** points to an outside force; they were being shaken by the false eschatological teaching being promulgated there by some false teacher (2Th 2:3)....The **aoist tense** points to the initial shock of excitement that has shaken them "from your mind," disturbing their mental poise and throwing them off balance. They are not permitting their mind to perform its proper function but are swayed by emotional reactions." ([1 & 2 Thessalonians- D. Edmond Hiebert](#) - anything by Hiebert is highly recommended!)

The aorist tense of **shaken** points to their initial shaking and the present tense of **disturbed** to the continued sense of disturbance.

John MacArthur comments that "The young believers had been shaken loose from their mental moorings and were adrift on a tossing sea of anxiety and fear, their faith, hope, and joy devastated by deception." ([1 & 2 Thessalonians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Paul warns Timothy about a similar shaking of the saints in his last written discourse:

But **avoid** worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that **the resurrection has already taken place**, and thus **they upset the faith of some**. 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord **abstain** from wickedness." (2Ti 2:16-19-note)

Adam Clarke on **shaken** - "The word to be shaken, signifies to be agitated as a ship at sea in a storm, and strongly marks the confusion and distress which the Thessalonians had felt in their false apprehension of this coming of Christ." (Clarke)

Vine explains that **from your composure** means "from sobriety, either to excitement or to anxiety. Believers are not to be controlled by the emotions, whether of dread or of desire, but by the mind, enlightened by the revelation of the mind of God." (Collected writings of W. E. Vine)

Hiebert on **from your composure** - It is a reminder to them that "believers are not to be controlled by the emotions, whether of dread or of desire, but by the mind, enlightened by the revelation of the mind of God." ([Ibid](#))

Composure (3563)(**nous**) refers to the seat of understanding (Lk 24:45), the faculty of intellectual perception (1Cor 14:15, Ro 12:2 "renewing of your **mind**") and moral judgment (Ro 7:25 = "with my **mind** am serving the law of God"). **Nous** is the God given faculty of perceiving and understanding and is the channel through which truth (or in the present passage **error!**) reaches the heart (figuratively the "control center" of our being).

Paul is saying don't allow these lies to shake from that firm foundation of that which you know is Truth. The writer of Hebrews would say hold on to your anchor of hope (Heb 6:19,20). Be diligent and you will have full assurance of hope until the end (Heb 6:11) whether it be by falling asleep or by Rapture. Don't abide in these false teachings saying that the Day of the Lord has already begun. You Thessalonians may be experiencing afflictions but this is still not the Day of the Lord. To reiterate a basic Biblical principle sound doctrine (2Th 2:1-12) is the basis for sober (minded) living (2Th 3:6-15)

Hampton Keathley - Through the study of God's Word, Christians are to know and become **anchored** in the Truth. The goal is that they become **transformed** by that truth through the renewing of their minds (Ro 12:1-2-note), not shaken from that truth and thus in a state of worry or disturbance by the many turbulent waves and winds of false doctrine promoted by the false teaching of men (see Eph 4:14-note). ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 Correction](#))

Related Resources:

- [Mind - Baker Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Mind - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

Be disturbed (2360)(**throeo** from **threomai** = the cry or wail; **Thayer** says **throeo** is derived from **thros** = clamor, tumult) means to cry aloud or scream thus conveying a feeling of fright or alarm. Jesus uses **throeo** in the prophetic Olivet Discourse exhorting us in light of wars and rumors of wars "See that you are not **frightened**." (Mt 24:6) In 2Th 2:2 **throeo** is in the **passive voice** which means to be inwardly aroused, to be disturbed, to be frightened, to be startled. The use of the **present tense** with a preceding negative is an exhortation to stop continually being shaken by the false teaching.

Here's the idea - Don't continue to be startled and surprised to the point that you are terrified and clamoring because you're in such a state of nervous excitement.

John Phillips comments on their clamoring - No wonder! If Paul was right that the Rapture preceded the Great Tribulation, and if they were already in the Great Tribulation, then they had missed the Rapture-and that was something about which to wail. If the false teachers were right and the Rapture followed the Great Tribulation, and if that dreaded event had already begun, doom and gloom, terrors and horrors unimaginable, lay ahead. That, too, was something about which to wail. Neither view offered any comfort (1Th. 4:18; 5:11). Paul pleads with his friends not to be so gullible, so swiftly moved from the truth." (Exploring 2 Thessalonians)

Hiebert points out that "The **aorist tense** of the preceding verb ("shaken") pointed to the initial shock produced by the false teaching, but the **present tense** here denotes the resultant excited, fluttery state. It implies that the symptoms of disquietude and alarm have already appeared among them. The negative (*mēde*) suggests that although they may have experienced the initial shock, they should not yield to such an unstable condition."

Vine on be disturbed - The things to which he was about to refer were not only not to be permitted to move them away from their convictions and purposes of mind, they were not even to be permitted to disturb its peace. The difference between "shaken" and "troubled" seems to be that the former refers to the shock sustained, the latter to the consequent disturbance. (Ibid)

SOURCE OF SAINTS' DECEPTION

Why was the deception so convincing? Three means were used by the Adversary to produce alarm -**by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us**.

What was the deception? The saints were being deceived to believe they were in the horrible time of the Tribulation as described in detail in Revelation 6-19.

John Phillips - The Thessalonians had been ensnared in a threefold cord of deception. They were the victims of wrong information, and wrong information is always dangerous. For a traveler to be told to turn left when he should turn right, for a doctor to prescribe medicine when he should prescribe surgery, and for a financial advisor to suggest buying when he should suggest selling is the giving of wrong information. In each case, it could be disastrous. For a preacher to teach one thing when he should be teaching the opposite is equally dangerous-more so, in some instances, because it imperils immortal souls. (Ibid)

J Vernon McGee - apparently someone had been circulating a letter or an oral word among the Thessalonians that the Day of the

Lord had come. It is interesting that there is always a group of super–duper saints who seem to think they get direct information from the Lord. They don't think they need to study the Word of God; they imagine they get their information directly through dreams or visions or special revelations. Now, friend, I admit that it is much easier to pick up all your information in a telephone conversation than it is to go to school or take up the Bible and study it, but it won't be coming straight from God. So there was circulating in Thessalonica a word that had come to them, and it was a special "revelation," something that Brother Paul had not told them. ([2 Thessalonians 2 Commentary - 'Thru the Bible'](#))

Keathley - Following the previous negatives ("may not be shaken ... or be disturbed"), each false claim is preceded by the Greek, **mete**, "**and not**" or "**neither...nor**." This suggests that those who were bothering the church with the false information were making three distinct claims as to its source. ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 Correction](#))

By a spirit (literally "neither by a spirit") - This phrase suggests that false teachers can get their false message from lying spirits (Satan, demons, other false teachers, their own fallacious thinking). This is a clear contrast with Paul and all teachers of truth for they receive their message from the Holy Spirit.

Keathley on by a spirit - This undoubtedly refers to the claim of some to a prophetic utterance made in the power of the Spirit of God. There were evidently those in the church with the gift of prophecy, but the church and the leaders were to carefully examine and accept only what was from God. In other words, was it in keeping with both the Old Testament and with what they had heard from Paul, an apostle (1Th 5:19-20; 2Th 2:15)?

Hiebert on by a spirit - denotes a prophetic utterance professedly given under the operation of the Spirit.

Philip Comfort on by a spirit - This is a metonymy for revelation given by Spirit-inspired prophecy.

John warned of this lying **spirit**:

Beloved, do not believe every **spirit**, but test the **spirits** to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the **Spirit** of God: every **spirit** that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every **spirit** that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the **spirit** of the **antichrist**, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1Jn 4:1-3-note)

In **Paul's** first letter to the Thessalonians he commanded the saints to carefully examine all teachings:

Do not despise prophetic utterances. But **examine** (dokimazo in the present imperative = continually as enabled by the Spirit) everything carefully; **hold fast** (katecho also present imperative) to that which is good." (1Th 5:20,21-note)

The Thessalonians would have been unlikely to have been so shaken and disturbed if they had imitated the pattern of the noble minded saints at Berea:

Now these were more **noble-minded** than those in Thessalonica, for they received (dechomai = they "put the welcome mat out for") the word with **great eagerness, examining** the **Scriptures** daily, to see whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11-note)

In his first letter Paul had written

For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit (1Th 2:3-note)

Comment: One wonders if this testimony of the truth of what he had written was given in a sense to prepare them for "error...impurity...(and) deceit" that led to him writing a second letter?

And for this reason (1Th 2:10-12) we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's **message**, you accepted it not as the **word of men**, but for what it really is, the **word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe. (1Th 2:13-note)

Comment: In this case the **message** the Thessalonians had received and accepted was in fact not **the word of God's message** but the **word of men** and it had the opposite effect of the Word of God! The **Word of God** "performs its work in you who believe" by renewing one's mind and stabilizing one's faith, whereas the lies of the adversary produce a sense of doubt and dread.

By...a message (word) - Someone brought a personal (vocal) message to the Thessalonian church and alleged the message was from the apostle himself when in fact it was not.

John Phillips says **message** or logos "here refers to some teaching that claimed to be revealed truth but that was nothing of the kind. Here the teaching concerned the second coming of Christ. It was false teaching. The Thessalonians should have been more

cautious, like the Bereans, about accepting teaching at its face value, no matter how respected the teacher (Acts 17:10-11)."

Message (literally "nor by a word") (3056)(**logos**) is the general term for speaking, but always refers to speaking with rational content. **BDAG** says **logos** is "a communication whereby the mind finds expression." A **message** is a communication containing information, in this case the false information that the Day of the Lord had come! Today Paul might say they received a text or email as if it was from him! The devil is adept at adopting to technology as witnessed by the proliferation of pornography on the internet and sexting in texting!

Keathley on **message** - It may have been just someone's opinion in view of the conditions or perhaps the claim of a verbal message from the missionaries.

By...a letter as if from us - Refers to a written message **purported** to be in some shape, form or fashion "Pauline" in nature. Here the Greek preposition for "from" is *dia* which means "through" so that what they postulating was that Paul was the channel through which God revealed His will regarding the timing of the Day of the Lord.

Lenski suggests that "the three form a gradation: spirit is the ultimate means—word or statement the intermediate—letter the direct means."

Hiebert - Once introduced, apparently all three means were appealed to by different advocates to gain apostolic sanction for the teaching. But the disclaimer, "supposed to have come from us," marks all such claims as spurious. It is possible that Paul was not certain how the erroneous teaching there had arisen, and consequently resorted to this comprehensive denial of any connection with the view. Yet it is quite possible that his denial was evoked by definite information on the matter.

John Phillips - We have examples of this kind of thing in our own day. The Mormons are deceived by a false book that is widely distributed, cleverly advertised, and utterly a lie. (Exploring 2 Thessalonians)

Letter (1992)(**epistole** from **epistello** = to send to in turn from **epi** = to + **stello** = send) is a message which is transmitted (an epistle, a letter). The first use in was Paul (Saul) requesting letters from the high priest (Acts 9:1) permitting him to bind anyone who belonged to the Way (believers). (Acts 9:2) Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:34) wrote a letter to the Felix the governor (Acts 23:33) Tertius penned the **letter** to the Romans for Paul (Ro 16:22). Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians "not to associate with immoral people" (1Cor 5:9) and noted later that his **letter** caused the Corinthians sorrow. (2Cor 7:8) Enemies of the Gospel said of Paul ""His **letters** are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." (2Cor 10:10) In Col 4:16 Paul instructed the Colossians to read the letter "in the church of the Laodiceans." (Col 4:16, cp similar instruction in 1Th 5:27). Peter identified his second epistle writing "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder." (2Pe 3:1) In the last NT use Peter refers to Paul's "**letters**, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to understand which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." (2Pe 3:16)

Later in this same letter Paul exhorted the saints

So then, brethren, **stand firm** (present imperative = charge to continually keep standing firm on the truth - necessitates continual dependence on the Holy Spirit) and **hold to** (present imperative) the traditions which you were taught, whether by **word of mouth** or **by letter from us**. (2Th 2:15)

To add credibility that the Second letter to the Thessalonians was actually from him he wrote "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is **a distinguishing mark** (semeion) in every **letter**; this is the way I write." (2Th 3:17) This suggests that the false teaching had come in part via a forged epistle. 2Th 3:17 shows the early church how to distinguish between spurious and authentic. The point is that the letters to the church at Thessalonica were some of the first written by Paul and emphasize that from the very beginning the saints needed to be aware of false teaching and how to discern it from error. The same warning applies to the modern church. Let me ask you a question -- If you have Sunday School classes, who "critiques" the teachers. An even greater danger is present in the modern church where formal Sunday School classes have given way to "Small Groups" or "missional communities." Why are these more at risk of false teaching? Simply because the number of mature teachers in a younger church is generally limited especially if there are 10's to 100's of "missional communities!" One of the young men I disciplined related how he left a small group which he enjoyed socially because the leader began to introduce false teaching and there were no elders or church leaders monitoring the group. If you are using the "missional community" model, the burden of proof is on the elders and church leaders to periodically monitor these groups to ensure that sound doctrine is being promulgated. This is a stewardship for which elders and leaders will one day be held accountable.

Epistole is used metaphorically of the members of the church at Corinth whose lives are like a letter proclaiming the Gospel - "You are our **letter**, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a **letter** of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts." (2Cor 3:2-3)

Holman Bible Dictionary - The English word "**epistle**" refers to written correspondence. The majority of the canonical writings of the New Testament are epistolary in nature. The New Testament includes letters written by Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is unidentified. See Letters.

Related Resources:

- [Letter - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Epistle - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Epistle - Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)

"**Epistle** is a less common word for a **letter**. A letter affords a writer more freedom, both in subject and expression, than does a formal treatise. A letter is usually occasional, that is, it is written in consequence of some circumstance which requires to be dealt with promptly. The style of a letter depends largely on the occasion that calls it forth." [From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine] "A broad line is to be drawn between the **letter** and the **epistle**. The one is essentially a spontaneous product dominated throughout by the image of the reader, his sympathies and interests, instinct also with the writer's own soul: it is virtually one half of an imaginary dialogue, the suppressed responses of the other party shaping the course of what is actually written ...; the other has a general aim, addressing all and sundry whom it may concern: it is like a public speech and looks towards publication" (J. V. Bartlet, in Hastings' Bib. Dic.)

Epistole - 24x/23v - Acts 9:2; 15:30; 22:5; 23:25, 33; Ro 16:22; 1 Co. 5:9; 16:3; 2 Co. 3:1, 2, 3; 7:8 (twice), 2Co 10:9, 10, 11; Col. 4:16; 1Th. 5:27; 2Th 2:2, 15; 3:14, 17; 2Pe 3:1, 16

Epistole - 22v in the **Septuagint**- 2Chr. 30:1, 6; Ezra 4:6, 8, 11; 5:6; Neh. 2:7, 8, 9; 6:5, 17, 19; Esther 3:13, 14; 8:12; Esther 9:26, 29; 10:3; Isa. 18:2; 39:1; Jer. 29:1; Da 4:1.

In the Septuagint there are strategically important uses of epistole in Esther, the first letter calling for the destruction of all Jews in Persia (Esther 3:13,14) and the second set announced Purim the celebration of the Jews' deliverance from the evil plot of Haman (Esther 9:26, 29).

King Hezekiah sent letters to call Israel back to Jehovah:

(2Chr 30:1) Now Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote **letters** also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.

(2Chr 30:6) And the couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the **letters** from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, "O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

As if from us ("purporting to come from us") - There seems to have been someone within the church (cp Acts 20:28, 29, 30) (or who came to the church) at Thessalonica who had presented himself as speaking and writing for Paul, as his representative. Note that the "**us**" refers to "**Paul, Silvanus and Timothy**" (1Th 1:1, 2Th 1:1).

Vine comments on the use of "**us**" - the use of the plural here shows further that Paul did not claim to be the sole channel through which revelations were given. Doubtless the old principle of the double witness still held good, as it did in the case of the Lord Himself, John 5:31; 8:17; cp. Romans 16:26 with Ephesians 3:8. But, further, any revelation from the same source, through whatever channel it might come, would certainly be consistent with what they had already received, and if any pretended revelation failed to satisfy this test it must be rejected as originating elsewhere than with God, Galatians 1:6-9. The apostle did not say that such messages had been delivered to them or received by them. He was aware that something had disturbed them, but apparently he had not had full information on the point, hence he warns them against possible devices whereby they might be deceived. (Collected Writings of W E Vine)

This teaching was especially convincing because of the persecutions they were experiencing (1Th 1:6, 2Th 1:4). It was necessary, therefore, for Paul to remind them of what he had taught and provide further information about their great eschatological hope.

The false teaching which had shaken and disturbed the saints at Thessalonica was that the **Day of the Lord** had come and they were caught unexpectedly, without warning, but this would did not fit with what Paul had taught them in 1Thessalonians 5 about the Day of the Lord (pay close attention to Paul's use of **pronouns**):

1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

2 For you yourselves know full well that the **day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night.

3 While **they** (not "we") are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon **them** (them not "us") suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and **they** (not "we") will not escape.

4 But **you** (not "they"), brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;

5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. **We** are not of night nor of darkness;

6 so then let **us** not sleep as others do, but let **us** be alert and sober.

7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

8 But since **we** are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

So notice that Paul had previously taught them that the Day of the Lord would not "overtake (the saints at Thessalonica) like a thief." (1Th 5:4)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

To the effect that the day of the Lord has come- see following discussion of various aspects of the Day of the Lord.

John Phillips comments that "Paul turned the whole wretched affair to good account. He used the local deception at Thessalonica as a springboard from which to launch a disclosure of a coming universal deception. Satan's most secret plans are hauled out into the open and exposed for everyone to see. Thus, Satan overreached himself at Thessalonica. His lie concerning the Day of the Lord becomes the basis for the unmasking of his most carefully guarded strategy for the end times." (Exploring 2 Thessalonians)

Has come ("is at hand" = **KJV**; "is already here" = **NET**) ([1764](#))(**enistemi** from **en** = in, with + **histemi** = to stand, to set, to place) is literally to stand on, to place in, to set in (something that has begun) and thus to be at hand, to be present or to be imminent. The uses of **enistemi** in Ro 8:38 ("nor things present") and in 1Cor 3:22 ("things present or things to come"), both "express a contrast between the present and the future makes clear the basic meaning of the word." (Hiebert) Other uses of **enistemi** include Gal 1:4 ("present evil age"), Heb 9:9 ("the present time") In 2Ti 3:1 Paul warns Timothy that "difficult times **will come**." Here in 2Th 2:2 Paul uses the **perfect tense** which depicts the **Day of the Lord** as having begun at a specific time in the past with continuing results and/or effects ~ "has come and is here!" Findlay stresses that the perfect tense "signifies more than nearness, more even than imminence; it means to be in place, in course—not merely approaching, but arrived."

The believers at Thessalonica were greatly distressed because they had expected the Rapture, the gathering together to the Lord, to take place before the Day of the Lord. If they had expected the Rapture after the Day of the Lord, they would have rejoiced because they would have known that Christ's coming was soon to follow. But they were looking for the blessed hope of Christ's coming, not the dread time of the Day of the Lord. They had expected to be taken to glory and heavenly rest, not left to persecution and divine wrath. It follows by simple deductive reasoning that Paul must have taught them they would miss the Day of the Lord (1Th 5:2-5; Rev 3:10), but they now they were confused because of the affliction they were experiencing, persecution that made them think they were now in the Day of the Lord, an error was reinforced by messages to claiming they were in the Day of the Lord. The result was shock, fear, and alarm.

Hiebert comments that "Some would limit the **parousia** to a single event viewed as coming after the end-time Tribulation. But under such a view "it is hardly possible to explain the variety of relationships belonging to parousia in these Epistles." If the hope of the rapture as set forth in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 could not be expected until after the end-time Tribulation, then believers are denied the hope of an imminent rapture. Then it would have been more natural for Paul to tell them to look for the coming of the Antichrist. "If this is a possibility for the church," Thomas asks, "why did Paul at no point teach this kind of anticipation?"

The following notes look at various aspects of the **Day of the Lord**.

The phrase **Day of the LORD** (synonymous with "the day of the LORD's anger", "day of the wrath of the LORD" in Ezekiel 7:9 , [that day](#)) is found in 24 verses and the following passages link to uses of the specific phrase plus other related Scriptures. To get a good sense of the character of this day study these Scriptures and make a simple list of all you learn about the **day of the LORD**.

Phillips - The "day of the Lord" is first mentioned in Isaiah 2:11-12, where it is defined as being the day when God will be exalted and man abased. (Ibid)

Related discussion -

Reginald E. Showers - The **Day of the Lord** refers to God's special interventions into the course of world events to judge His enemies, accomplish His purpose for history, and thereby demonstrate who He is--the sovereign God of the universe. (Maranatha, Our Lord Come. Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995, 38)

John Walvoord defines the **Day of the Lord** - It includes the tribulation time preceding the second advent of Christ as well as the whole millennial reign of Christ. It will culminate in the judgment of the great white throne. The Day of the Lord is therefore an extended period of time lasting over one thousand years.

The **IVP Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms** defines the **Day of the LORD** as "A biblical phrase prevalent among OT prophets who pointed to a future event or era (**not necessarily a single twenty-four-hour day**) during which God would visit judgment on Israel or the world. The NT authors interpreted the phrase in a futuristic sense but saw in Jesus Christ the beginning of the fulfillment of the Day of the Lord. For believers in Christ the Day of the Lord is an anticipation of hope; for unbelievers it holds only judgment leading to damnation. (Grenz, S., et al. Page 34. Downers Grove, Ill. IVP)

The **Day of the Lord** is so unique and significant that it is also referred to **that day**. As is often the case with Old Testament prophecy **that day** usually has a **two fold fulfillment, near and future**. For example in Isaiah **that day** is mentioned repeatedly, referring to a time of God's judgment, the near fulfillment usually (but read the context) predicting Babylon's coming conquest of Judah and the far future (but surely not far from where we are beloved, living in the 21st century!) similar to events before he second coming of Christ. If you are intrigued by "**that day**" I would encourage you to study the following 45 uses of the phrase **that day** in Isaiah, taking care to read the verse in context so that you might interpret the passage correctly as a few of the passages do not appear to refer directly to the **day of the LORD**. Enjoy! ([Click here](#) for the 45 uses of **that day** in Isaiah). Below is a "sampling" of uses of **that day** from Isaiah to encourage you to take some time and study this important time period of God's "calendar"...may this awesome truth not just inform you but transform your innermost being so that if you are not living expectantly, you might, like the saints of Thessalonica, begin to eagerly look forward to the return of God's Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who delivers us from **the wrath to come**. (in the "Day of the LORD")" (1Th 1:10-note)

Isaiah 2:11, 17, 20

11 The proud look of man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in **that day**. 12 For the LORD of hosts will have **a day** of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty, And against everyone who is lifted up, that he may be abased.

17 And the pride of man will be humbled, and the loftiness of men will be abased, and the LORD alone will be exalted in **that day**.

20 In **that day** men will cast away to the moles and the bats their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship

Isaiah 4:2

In **that day** the **Branch of the LORD** (the Messiah) will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel (the believing remnant of Jews - see below).

Isaiah 10:20

Now it will come about in **that day** that the **remnant of Israel** (click discussion of **remnant**) , and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. 21 A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

As an aside it is worth noting that **Isaiah** provides more information on the future **Day of the Lord** and the Millennial Kingdom than any other OT prophet and many of his descriptions are not found anywhere else in Scripture (see note Millennium 3)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Hold pointer over Scripture for pop up in NAS
{This list is note exhaustive}

OLD TESTAMENT

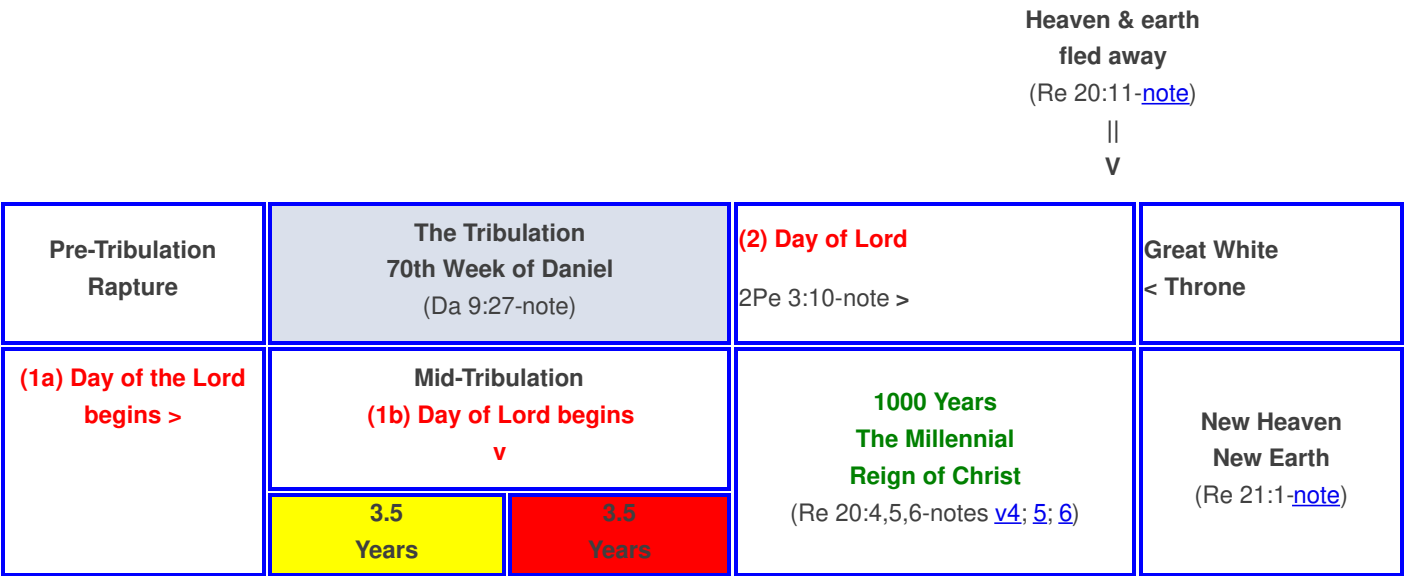
NEW TESTAMENT

Isa 2:11, 12-note, Isa 2:20, 21-note, Isa 13:6, 13:9, 34:8, 61:2 Jeremiah 30:7-note, Jeremiah 46:10 Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3 Joel 1:15, Joel 2:1, 11, 31, Joel 3:14 Amos 5:18, 20 Obadiah 1:15 Zeph 1:7,1:8,14, 15, 18, 2:2, 3 Zech 14:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21+ Malachi 3:2+, Malachi 4:5+	Acts 2:20 1Th 5:2-note 2Th 2:2, 2:3, 2:4 2Pe 3:10-note
--	---

The **day of the Lord** is a familiar Old Testament image for the ultimate day of God’s judgment, His final day in court when He settles the injustices of the world. From the above Scriptural references (and others) one can piece together the following portrait of the **Day of the Lord**.

Even a cursory study indicates that this day is **not a reference to a single 24 day** but to an extended period of time as illustrated in the diagram which will be explained below.

A TIMELINE OF THE DAY OF THE LORD



When does the Day of the Lord begin?

You will read descriptions in some commentaries that state the **Day of the Lord** follows the **rapture** of the church **(1a)** ("pre-tribulation rapture"- see **discussion of when the rapture occurs**) (1Th 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18-see notes 1Th 4:13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18), the event which most evangelicals feel immediately precedes the last seven years of Seventy Weeks of Daniel, and is popularly known as the **Tribulation**, although nowhere in Scripture is this seventieth week of 7 years specifically designated "the Tribulation" (let me know if you find a passage that contradicts this conclusion - remember that "the Great Tribulation" only refers to the last three and one-half years of this seven year period). The alternative inception date is Mid-Tribulation **(1b)**.

So when does it begin?

First, we must understand the basic timing of this last "Seven Year Period" (**Daniel's Seventieth Week**) which can be divided into two 3.5 year segments, a conclusion based upon study of Da 9:27 (see notes).

Daniel records the following prophecy he received from the angel Gabriel in answer to fervent prayer...

And **he** (the Antichrist) will make a firm covenant with **the many** (the Jews/Israel) for **one week** (one seven year period), but in **the middle of the week** (after 3.5 years) he will **put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering** (in the rebuilt Jewish temple) and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Da 9:27-note)

The Lord Jesus quoted from Daniel 9 as He explained the timing of the events immediately preceding His triumphant return because He wanted the Jews (and all mankind) living during the tumultuous time of Daniel's Seventieth Week to have an easily identifiable event that would indubitably signal the beginning of the the Great Tribulation which represents the final outpouring of God's wrath during the last 3.5 years of the Seventieth Week of Daniel..

Therefore when you see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** (referring to the Antichrist or some desecrating action he makes, cp his image - Rev 13:14,15) which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet (reference to Da 9:27-note, also in Daniel 11:31, 12:11), **standing in the holy place** (indicates the Jewish Temple will be rebuilt, cf Re 11:1, 2- see notes [Re 11:1](#); [11:2](#)) (let the reader understand)...there will be a **Great Tribulation**, (a specific 3.5 year period synonymous with the "Time of Jacob's Distress" in Jer 30:7-note) such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall...but immediately after **the tribulation** (especially the last 3.5 years = Great Tribulation) of those days **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL** from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky (Sign = the Lord returning on the clouds), and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the **SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY** with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." (Matthew 24:15, 21,29-31-note)

Now keeping in mind the timing of this dramatic event described by Daniel and Jesus, here in Second Thessalonians Paul addresses the false teaching that the persecution the Thessalonians were now experiencing was part of the great tribulation. He references the same crucial historical event as Daniel and Jesus in order to assure these fearful saints...

"Now we request (plead, implore, beg of) you, brethren, with regard to the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him (Paul refers not to two events but one event - the rapture he had written about in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18-see notes [1Th 4:13](#); [14](#); [15](#); [16](#); [17](#); [18](#)), that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure (literally "mind") or be disturbed (frightened) (false teaching about the Rapture and the Day of the Lord appears to have had a devastating impact on the Thessalonian saints) either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the **day of the Lord** has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy (a very specific presumably identifiable time of rebellion against God) comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** (the Antichrist) is **revealed** (apokalupto = literally has the veil removed exposing to open view what he had before hidden regarding his evil character. The aorist tense points to a definite time, a specific historical event), the son of destruction (apoleia = ruin not annihilation), who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he **takes his seat in the temple of God** (which Jesus referred to as "standing in the holy place"), displaying himself as being God." (2Th 2:1, 2, 3, 4)

From Second Thessalonians when does Paul state that the Day of the Lord will begin? First, Paul says "**the apostasy**" will occur. Then he states when and where "**the man of lawlessness**" will be revealed. Specifically he states that the revelation of the Antichrist must precede the **Day of the LORD**. Although many favor the Day of the Lord beginning at point (**1a**) in the above diagram (after the pre-tribulation rapture), when one compare Scripture with Scripture, there is certainly support for considering the beginning for the **Day of the Lord** at the midpoint of the 7 Year period of Daniel (**1b**).

Related Resources:

- More on the Day of the Lord
- Lecture on Revelation, part 4

- [The Day of the Lord by Jeff Miller](#)
- [The Day of the Lord by A C Gaebelein \(1907\)](#)
- [The Day of the Lord by Tony Garland](#)

Why is the Day of the Lord not a single day?

Peter using the same term as Paul, says that...

the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (2Peter 3:10-note) (See point **2** on the timeline above)

The question naturally follows "When will the heavens pass away?" Clearly there is no indication that the heavens pass away during the "Great Tribulation" which follows the full revelation of the Antichrist in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Again comparing Scripture with Scripture, we read that following the defeat of the Antichrist at the return of Christ (read Revelation 19:11-21-note) there is a **1000 year period** (I believe John clearly meant a literal **1000 years** when he was inspired by the Holy Spirit - if it doesn't mean **1000**, one could make it mean almost anything he wanted and it would be "meaningless" and yet the Greek word [chilioi](#)

is used **4 times** in the passages that follow!) in which **Christ reigns on earth**, John testifying...

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a **thousand years**. And when the **thousand years** are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of **the earth** (indicating that Christ and His saints are **on earth** for a specific 1000 year period), Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." (see **notes** [Revelation 20:4](#); [20:5](#); [20:6](#); [20:7](#); [20:8](#); [20:9](#); [20:10](#))

In the next event John describes an unusual scene that parallels 2 Peter 3:10:

And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose **presence earth and heaven fled away**, and no place was found for them. (Re 20:11-note)

John MacArthur commenting on **presence earth and heaven fled away** writes...

That amazing, incredible statement describes the "uncreation" of the universe. The earth will have been reshaped by the devastating judgments of the Tribulation and restored during the millennial kingdom. Yet it will still be tainted with sin and subject to the effects of the Fall—decay and death; hence it must be destroyed, since nothing corrupted by sin will be permitted to exist in the eternal state ("But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" 2Pe 3:13-see note). God will in its place create "a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away" (John writes "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea." Re 21:1-note) The present earth and heaven will not merely be moved or reshaped, since John saw in his vision that no place was found for them. They will be uncreated and go totally out of existence. This is nothing less than the sudden, violent termination of the universe ([MacArthur J. Revelation 1-11](#). and [Revelation 12-22. Moody](#))

One can conclude that both Peter and John are describing the time period, the day which Peter refers to as the **Day of the Lord**. And yet we know that the Day of the Lord has already commenced either at the beginning or the midpoint of the Tribulation following the revelation of the Antichrist, who is defeated by Christ at His return to set up His 1000 year kingdom on an earth, the same earth which Peter says will pass away in the **Day of the Lord**. It therefore is reasonable to conclude that the **Day of the Lord** is not a single day but is an extended period beginning at the time which includes the Seven Year Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ to set up His earthly 1000 year kingdom and the destruction of the present heaven and earth.

What Will the Day of the Lord look like?

Summarizing some of the descriptions in the OT references, we see that this Day is

coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it" (Isaiah 13:9), "a day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself on His foes...a slaughter for the Lord GOD of hosts" (Jeremiah 46:10), "a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations" (Ezekiel 30:3), "near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15), "surely it is near" (Joel 2:1), "great and very awesome, and who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11), "the great and awesome day" (Joel 2:31), "near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14), "It will be darkness and not light" (Amos 5:18), "even gloom with no brightness in it" (Amos 5:20), "(a day when) your dealings will return on your own head" (Obadiah 1:15), "near and coming very quickly...in it the warrior cries out bitterly, a day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zephaniah 1:14,15), "the day of the LORD'S wrath and all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth" (Zephaniah 1:18), "the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zephaniah 2:2), "His coming...is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap" (Malachi 3:2), "the great and terrible day" (Malachi 4:5), "will come just like a thief in the night" (1Th 5:2).

Notice that the **Day of the Lord** is frequently associated with seismic disturbances (Joel 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11; 2:31; 3:16), violent weather (Ezekiel 13:5, 5, 7f), clouds and thick darkness (Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:7, 8, 9f.), cosmic upheaval (Joel 2:3,30) Joel tells us that as a result of the Day of the Lord there will also be physical blessings, fruitfulness, and prosperity (Joel 2:21, 22, 23f.; 3:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21). In short the **Day of the Lord** results in judgment poured out upon sinners that subsequently leads to blessings on the penitent. This Day also brings about the fulfillment of all God's promises (especially the promise of the Land) to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this fulfillment being consummated in the Millennial Kingdom on earth. To do away with the "**Millennium**" as sadly many do is to make it impossible for God to fulfill His Covenant with the remnant of believing Israel!

The preceding Scriptures on the Day of the Lord are only a sampling of descriptions, beloved This **Day** will be so awful that men's hands will hang limp, they will writhe like women in pain, their faces will be red hot because of what is happening. This **Day** is the day when the wrath of God inextricably exterminates sinners and sin forever from earth in preparation for the new heavens and new earth in the Day of God.

What should be our response to the truth about the DOL?

The **Day of the Lord** is coming, and it will come suddenly and will be an awesome and terrible day. It is a day of gloom and of destruction from the Almighty. It is a day which includes Christ's Second Coming to defeat the Antichrist (Re 17:14, 19:11, 12, 13, 14,1 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 - see **notes** [Re 17:14](#), [Re 19:11ff](#)) and to reign and rule on earth for 1000 years (**Millennial Reign**) as King of kings and as Lord of lords (Rev 20:4, 5, 6-see **notes** [Re 20:4](#); [5](#); [6](#)). And finally Peter tells us that it is the day in which the world as we know it will finally and irrevocably come to an end (2Pe 3:10-note)

On the basis of these awesome events Peter exhorts us...

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **looking** for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are **looking** for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you **look** for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless (See **notes** 2Peter 3:11; 12; 13; 14)

What does Peter emphasize by repetition? Obviously he emphasized looking to the future. And so his charge is to take care what you look for, because what you are looking for will determine what you are living for!

Dear reader, if you are not a believer, let Peter's teaching awaken in you a sense of urgency to

**Seek the LORD while He may be found.
Call upon Him while He is near**
(Isaiah 55:6).

And as Isaiah records elsewhere (in the King James translation):

**Look unto me, and be ye saved,
All the ends of the earth
For I am God, and there is none else.**
(Isaiah 45:22)

Seek Christ's righteousness through faith in His atoning sinless sacrifice. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be rescued from eternal loss and separation. There will be no excuses in the **Day of the Lord**. No second chances. No bribing the Righteous Judge.

The Day of the Lord Is at Hand
The day of the Lord is at hand, at hand;
Its storms roll up the sky;
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold;
All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
And the day of the Lord is at hand, at hand,
The day of the Lord is at hand.

Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
While the Lord of all ages is here?
True hearts will leap at the trumpet of God,
And those who can suffer can dare.
Each old age of gold was an iron age, too,
And the meekest of saints may find stern work to do
In the day of the Lord at hand, at hand,
In the day of the Lord at hand.

Beloved, how should we who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb respond to the truth about the great and awesome day of Jehovah? Fanny Crosby's hymn sounds the call to all who would be God's faithful watchmen and watchwomen. Let us sound the alarm to all those who the Spirit graciously sends into our life for the Day is nigh...

Sound the Alarm!

Sound the alarm! Let the watchman cry!
"Up! for the day of the Lord is nigh;
Who will escape from the wrath to come?
Who have a place in the soul's bright home?"

Refrain

*Sound the alarm, watchman! Sound the alarm!
For the Lord will come with a conqu'ring arm;
And the hosts of sin, as their ranks advance,
Shall wither and fall at His glance.*

Sound the alarm! Let the cry go forth,
Swift as the wind, o'er the realms of earth;
"Flee to the Rock where the soul may hide!
Flee to the Rock! in its cleft abide!"

Refrain

Sound the alarm on the mountain's brow!
Plead with the lost by the wayside now:
Warn them to come and the truth embrace;
Urge them to come and be saved by grace.

Refrain

Sound the alarm in the youthful ear;
Sound it aloud that the old may hear;
Blow ye the trump while the day-beams last!
Blow ye the trump till the light is past!

Refrain

See the discussion below for the time referred to as the "Day of God" (2Pe 3:12-note, 1Co 15:28). Note that the **Day of the Lord** contrasts with a similar phrase **the day of Christ** (Php 1:6-note, Php 1:10-note, Php 2:16-note, 1Cor 1:8, 5:5) all NT uses of this phrase relating to the reward and blessing of the individual members of the body of Christ.

William Barclay has an interesting note:

The **Day of the Lord** is a conception which runs all through the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The Jews saw time in terms of two ages— this present age , which is wholly bad and past remedy; and the age to come, which is the golden age of God. How was the one to turn into the other? The change could not come about by human effort or by a process of development, for the world was on the way to destruction. As the Jews saw it, there was only one way in which the change could happen; it must be by the direct intervention of God. The time of that intervention they called the **Day of the Lord**. It was to come without warning. It was to be a time when universe was shaken to its foundations. It was to be a time when the judgment and obliteration of sinners would come to pass and, therefore, it would be a time of terror.

COMPARISON OF THREE DIVINE DAYS IN THE END TIMES		
OF THE LORD	OF CHRIST	OF GOD
Extended period beginning after revealing of the Antichrist, including the Great Tribulation , Christ's triumphant Second Coming , the Millennium (1000 Reign of Christ on earth) terminating in the burning up of heavens and earth followed by the Great White Throne judgment.	Occurs after the Rapture of the church, is most probably in heaven during the seven year period of Daniel's Seventieth Week and is associated with glorification and reward for believers (Note: details are sketchy on this day so avoid being too dogmatic)	Follows the Millennium , the 1000 year reign of Christ and the cleansing of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the eternal new heavens and new earth and Christ delivering the kingdom to God the Father.
Multiple Scriptures (see chart above)	Php 1:6-note Php 1:10-note Php 2:16-note 1Co 1:8, 5:5	2Pe 3:12-note, 1Co 15:24, 25, 26, 27, 28

John Phillips on **Day of Christ** versus **Day of the Lord** - The "day of Christ" is imminent; the "day of the Lord" can come only after numerous other things have prepared the way. The day of Christ is for the church; the day of the Lord is for the world. The day of Christ is primarily a day of joy; the day of the Lord is primarily a day of judgment. The day of Christ is the church's; the day of the Lord is the world's horror. Everything that Paul is now about to reveal is true of the Day of the Lord; none of it is true of the day of Christ. The day of Christ is the subject of the previous verse: "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (2Th 2:1). The Day of the Lord is the subject of this verse (2Th 2:3) and the teaching that follows. (Ibid)

The **Day of the Lord** will occur suddenly and unexpectedly, like a thief, resulting in surprise and irreparable loss for those who are unprepared ("in the Ark" of Christ being the only "preparation")

John Calvin summarizes what our attitude should be in the meantime - This has been added, that the faithful might be always watching, and not promise tomorrow to themselves...(Peter in 2Pe 3:10) now shakes off our sleepiness, so that we may attentively expect Christ at all times, lest we should become idle and negligent, as it is usually the case. **For whence is it that flesh indulges itself except that there is no thought of the near coming of Christ?**

Hiebert sums up 2Th 2:2 - The natural reaction to this teaching was fear and agitation. The apostle appeals to them in the interest of the very hope of "our gathering together unto him," set forth in the first epistle (1Th 4:13-18), not to allow themselves to be shaken and troubled by this unwarranted teaching. In what follows, Paul assures them that their sufferings, severe though they were, were

not to be identified with the persecutions associated with the Day of the Lord and the coming man of lawlessness.

John MacArthur - To end the Thessalonians' confusion, Paul needed to refute the lies of the false teachers. And to allay the Thessalonians' fears, he needed to correct their misunderstandings about the Day of the Lord. The apostle accomplished both objectives simply by proving that the Day of the Lord could not have arrived. His unarguable point was that God has fixed in the future an unmistakable event that must take place before the Day of the Lord arrives. That event still has not happened. Paul wove that truth into an exhortation to the Thessalonians to be ready for the end times by not being deceived, forgetful, ignorant, unbelieving, insecure, or weak. ([1 & 2 Thessalonians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

The Time of the Rapture

Richard Mayhue

(From Appendix: [1 & 2 Thessalonians- Triumphs and Trials of a Consecrated Church](#))

Regardless of one's prophetic preferences, the rapture will be part of any endtimes scenario because the fact of the rapture is so clearly stated in Scripture (1 Cor 15:51–52; 1 Thess 4:15–17). What is not so clear is the time of the rapture in relationship to other prophetic events.

There are three basic time possibilities for the rapture. The posttribulation rapture occurs as just one of many events at the end, just prior to eternity future, according to the amillennial or postmillennial scenario. To some premillennialists, the posttribulation rapture occurs at the conclusion of Daniel's seventieth week. To other premillennialists, it occurs at the midpoint of the seven year period of Daniel's seventieth week and is called the midtribulation rapture. Others, like this writer, believe that the rapture occurs before this seven year period and is called the pretribulation rapture. What follows is a summary of the evidence that makes the pretribulation rapture the preferred view for this writer.

Arguments from silence

While arguments from silence do have their limitations and are never conclusive, they are worthy of consideration. So the question is asked, 'If posttribulationism best describes the biblical data concerning the resurrection and rapture of Church Age saints, what conclusions would we logically expect from this scheme?' This would also be germane to midtribulationism.

First, if the Church does endure this time of tribulation in Daniel's seventieth week, one would naturally expect Revelation, the most detailed account of the tribulation in the Scriptures, to describe the Church's existence during this time.

Second, if the Church indeed will experience the unprecedented intensity of wrath predestined for the tribulation, one would expect the epistles to contain preparatory warnings for Church Age saints.

Third, if the Church is to survive the tribulation, one would expect this fact to figure prominently in the need for a rapture.

However, not one of these basic corollaries to an alleged posttribulation or midtribulation rapture is taught in the Scriptures.

The Church is not mentioned in Revelation 4–18

If the Church will experience the tribulation of Daniel's seventieth week, then surely the most detailed study of tribulation events would include an account of the Church's role in Revelation.

It is remarkable and totally unexpected that John would shift from detailed instructions for the Church to absolute silence about the Church for the subsequent fifteen chapters if, in fact, the Church continued into the tribulation.

Looking at this observation from another point, it is also true that nowhere in Scripture is it taught that the Church and Israel would coexist as the mutually exclusive centers for God's redemptive message.

Today, the Church universal is God's human channel of redemptive truth. In the tribulation, Revelation gives certain indications that the Jewish remnant will be God's human instrument. The unbiased reader would certainly be impressed by the abrupt shift from the Church in Revelation chapters 2–3 to the 144,000 from the twelve tribes in Revelation chapters 7 and 14. He would certainly ask, 'Why?'

Further, if Revelation chapter 12 is a mini-synopsis of the tribulation period and if the woman who gave birth to the male child (Rev 12:13) is Israel, then logically the time focuses on the nation of Israel and not the Church.

The epistles do not contain preparatory warnings of an impending Tribulation for Church Age believers

God's instructions to the Church in the epistles contain a variety of warnings, but never are believers warned to prepare for entering and enduring the tribulation.

They warn vigorously about coming error and false prophets (Acts 20:29–30; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1–3; Jude 4). They warn against ungodly living (Eph 4:25–5:7; 1 Thess 4:3–8; all of 1 Peter).

It is incongruous, then, that the Scriptures would be silent on such a traumatic change for the Church. If posttribulationism were true, one would expect the epistles to teach the fact of the Church in the tribulation, the purpose of the Church in the tribulation, and the conduct of the Church in the tribulation.

The Rapture is rendered inconsequential if it is Posttribulational

First, if God miraculously preserves the Church through the tribulation, why have a rapture? If it is to avoid the wrath of God at Armageddon, why would not God continue to protect the saints on earth (as postulated by Posttribulationism), just as He protected Israel (Ex 8:22; 9:4, 26; 10:23; 11:7) from His wrath poured out upon Pharaoh and Egypt? Further, if the purpose of the rapture is to avoid Armageddon, why resurrect the saints who are already immune?

Secondly, if the rapture took place in connection with our Lord's posttribulational coming, the subsequent separation of the sheep from the goats (Matt 25:31ff.) would be redundant. Separation would have taken place in the very act of translation.

Thirdly, if all believers are raptured and glorified just prior to the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom, who will propagate the human race and thus populate the Kingdom?

The Scriptures indicate that the living unbelievers will be removed from the earth and be judged at the end of the tribulation (Matt 13:41–42; 25:41). Yet, they also teach that children will be born during the Millennium and that people will be capable of sin (Isa 65:20; Rev 20:7–10). Neither of these truths would be possible if all unbelievers had been judged and all believers had been glorified.

Superlative arguments

Revelation 3:10

Victory is claimed by both Pretribulationists and Posttribulationists because of the exegetical support this passage lends to their interpretation. It is true that Revelation 3:10 is the crucial verse. It is the veritable watershed of the tribulation tension. If one side can demonstrate incontrovertibly that it supports their position, then the tribulation controversy should be over. The key phrase is *tēreō ek*.

The meaning of *ek*

It is true that *ek* has the basic idea of emergence, but this is not always the case. Two notable examples are 2 Corinthians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 1:10. In the Corinthian passage, Paul rehearses his rescue from death by God. Now Paul did not emerge from a state of death, but rather was rescued from that potential danger.

Even more convincing is 1 Thessalonians 1:10. Here Paul states that Jesus is rescuing us out of the wrath to come. Although *orgē* can be understood in several ways, it is best to interpret it as God's eternal wrath (cf. Rom 5:9; Eph 5:6; 1 Th 5:9). The idea is not emergence out of, but rather protection from entrance.

Therefore, it is concluded that *ek* can be understood to mean 'a continuing state outside of' rather than 'emergence from within'. Thus, neither pretribulationism nor posttribulationism can be dogmatic at this point. At best, both positions concerning *ek* remain possible.

The meaning of *tēreō ek*

It is argued that if John had meant 'to keep from', he would have used *tēreō apo* (cf. James 1:27). But it is more than equally true that if John had meant 'protection within', he would have used *tēreō* with *en*, *eis*, or *dia*. It is submitted that the greater burden of proof lies with posttribulationism since their position of immunity within the tribulation does not explain the use of *ek*. They do not argue for evacuation in Revelation 3:10, but rather protection.

First, *ek* is much closer to *apo* in meaning than it is to *en*, *eis*, or *dia*. The two frequently overlap, and in modern Greek *apo* is absorbing *ek*. When combined with *tēreō*, *ek* much more closely approximates *apo* than it does *en*, *eis*, or *dia*. The burden is upon the posttribulationists to prove otherwise.

Second, the phrase *tēreō en* is used four times in the New Testament (Acts 12:5; 25:4; 1 Pet 1:4; Jude 21). In each instance, it

implies previous existence within with a view to its continuation within. Now if *tēreō en* means continued existence within, what does *tēreō ek* mean? Since they are anything but synonymous, it quite logically means to maintain an existence outside.

***tēreō ek* in John 17:15**

John 17:15 is the only other passage in the New Testament where *tēreō ek* occurs. This combination of words does not occur in the Septuagint. It is assumed that whatever the phrase means here, it will also have the same meaning in Revelation 3:10.

If *tēreō ek* in John 17:15 means 'previous existence within', then it contradicts 1 John 5:19. Here, the statement is made that believers are of God, and unbelievers are in the evil one. Now if 1 John 5:19 implies that believers are not in the power of the evil one, John 17:15 could not possibly imply that they are in the power of Satan and needing protection. John 17:15 records our Lord's petition to keep them outside of the evil one.

Since John 17:15 means to keep outside of the evil one, then the parallel thought in Revelation 3:10 is to keep the Church outside of the hour of testing. Therefore, a pretribulation rapture is necessitated to fulfill the promise.

The martyrs in Revelation 6:9–11 and Rev 7:14

If Revelation 3:10 means immunity or protection within as posttribulationists posit, then several contradictions result.

First, if protection in Revelation 3:10 is limited to protection from God's wrath only and not Satan's, then Revelation 3:10 denies our Lord's request in John 17:15.

Second, if it is argued that Revelation 3:10 means total immunity, then of what worth is the promise in light of Revelation 6:9–11 and 7:14 where martyrs abound? The wholesale martyrdom of saints during the tribulation demands that the promise be interpreted as 'keeping from' the hour of testing, not 'keeping within'.

Summary

1. Ek can mean 'emergence from within', or it can mean 'a continued state outside'.
2. *Tēreō en* is used in Acts 12:5, Acts 25:4, 1 Peter 1:4, and Jude 21 and implies 'previous and continued existence within'. Therefore *tēreō ek* logically demands to be understood as 'continued existence outside'.
3. If a posttribulation rapture was intended to be taught by the immunity of saints to wrath through the tribulation, then John would have used *tēreō en*, *eis*, or *dia* in Revelation 3:10.
4. Consistent with the previous observations, *tēreō ek* in John 17:15 would contradict 1 John 5:19 if, in fact, it implied 'previous existence within'.
5. If *tēreō* in Revelation 3:10 implies 'previous existence within', it contradicts the prayer in John 17:15, if immunity is limited to God's wrath. Or its alleged promise of total immunity is rendered null and void by the slaughter of saints in Revelation 6:9–11 and 7:14.
6. Only the interpretation of *tēreō ek* in Revelation 3:10 which understands that the church will not enter the tribulation, that is, they will be kept out or guarded from entering, satisfies a thorough exegesis of the phrase. This finding is in perfect harmony with a pretribulation understanding of the rapture.

John 14:1–3

John 14:1–3 refers to Christ's coming again. It is not a promise to all believers that they shall go to Him at death. It does refer to the rapture of the Church. Note the close parallel between the promises of John 14:1–3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

Jesus instructed the disciples that He was going to His Father's house (heaven) to prepare a place for them. He promised them that He would return and receive them so that they could be with Him wherever He was.

The phrase 'wherever I am', while implying continued presence in general, here means presence in heaven in particular. Our Lord told the Pharisees in John 7:34, 'Where I am you cannot come.' He was not talking about His present abode on earth but rather His resurrected presence at the right hand of the Father. In John 14:1–3, 'where I am' must be 'in heaven' or the intent of 14:1–3 would be wasted and worthless.

A posttribulation rapture demands that the saints meet Christ in the air and immediately descend to earth without experiencing what our Lord promised in John 14. Since John 14 refers to the rapture, then only a pretribulation rapture satisfies the language of John 14:1–3 and allows raptured saints to dwell with Christ in His Father's house.

The sequence of events at Christ's posttribulation coming demands a pretribulation Rapture

Matthew 24:31

At the rapture, Christ himself will gather the saints (1 Thess 4:16–17). At the posttribulational coming of Christ, the angels will gather together the elect (Matt 24:31). This difference is irreconcilable, if understood in the posttribulation sequence of events.

Matthew 13:41–42

The rapture will first separate believers out from among unbelievers. However, at Christ's posttribulational coming, angels will first gather out unbelievers from believers. Again, only a pretribulation rapture can harmonize these two historical events. See also Matthew 13:49–50 and Matthew 24:37–41 where unbelievers are removed from among believers at the tribulation's termination.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

For argument's sake, let us suppose that posttribulationism is true. What would we expect to find in 1 Thessalonians 4? How does this compare with what we do observe?

First, we would expect the Thessalonians to be joyous over the fact that loved ones are home with the Lord and will not have to endure the horrors of the tribulation. But, we discover the Thessalonians are grieving because they fear their loved ones will miss the rapture. Only a pretribulation rapture accounts for this grief.

Second, we would expect the Thessalonians to be grieving over their own impending trial rather than grieving over loved ones. Furthermore, we would expect them to be inquisitive about their future doom. But the Thessalonians have no fear or question about the coming tribulation.

Third, we would expect Paul, even in the absence of interest or questions by the Thessalonians, to have provided instruction and exhortation for such a supreme test which would make their present tribulation seem microscopic in comparison. But there is not one indication of any impending tribulation.

First Thessalonians 4 fits the model of a pretribulation rapture. It is incompatible with midtribulationism or posttribulationism.

Peri de in 1 Thessalonians 5:1

Peri de is used eighteen times in the New Testament. In all but four cases, an obvious change in time or topic is implied (Matt 22:31; 24:36; Mark 12:26; 13:32). This prepositional phrase is used by Paul eight times. Every other Pauline use of peri de indicates a change in topic. Therefore, it is concluded that Paul's use of peri de in 1 Thessalonians 5:1 indicates a change in topic and time. This is consistent with his earlier use in this epistle (cf. 4:9).

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, Paul has answered the question concerning the experience of dead loved ones when the rapture comes. But in 5:1 and following, Paul shifts to the Day of the Lord and the subsequent judgment upon unbelievers. This is a totally different topic than the rapture and an event that will occur at a totally different time than the rapture.

If 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 is to be taken as one unit of thought, then Paul's use of peri de means nothing. However, if it is to be explained, it is best interpreted as a major shift in thought within the prophetic context. Only a pretribulation rapture would account for this.

Conclusions

The strongest and most compelling biblical reasons for preferring a pretribulational interpretation of the rapture have been offered here. Pretribulationism most consistently fits the biblical data and is therefore championed by this writer as the view which best explains the coming of our Lord for His own. (1 & 2 Thessalonians: Triumphs and Trials of a Consecrated Church, Christian Focus Publications Focus on the Bible Commentary)