2 Thessalonians 2:3 Commentary

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
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Another Overview Chart - 2 Thessalonans - Charles Swindoll

COMPARISON OF
1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

1 THESSALONIANS	2 THESSALONIANS
Addresses how the Thessalonians were evangelizes 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 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction:

Greek me tis humas exapatese (3SAAS) kata medena (not even one) tropon, hoti ean me elthe (3SAAS) e

apostasia proton kai apokaluphthe (3SAPS) o anthropos tes anomias o huios tes apoleias:

KJV Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

ESV Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

NET Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.

NIV Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

NJB Never let anyone deceive you in any way. It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has taken place and there has appeared the wicked One, the lost One,

NLT Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed-- the one who brings destruction.

YLT let not any one deceive you in any manner, because -- if the falling away may not come first, and the man of sin be revealed -- the son of the destruction,

- **No one** - Mt 24:4-6 1Co 6:9 Eph 5:6
- **Apostasy**: 1Ti 4:1-3 2Ti 3:1-3, 4:3,4
- **Man**: 2Th 2:8-10 Da 7:25 1Jn 2:18 Rev 13:11-18
- **The son**: John 17:12 Rev 17:8,11)

DO NOT BE DECEIVED

Let no one in any way (thoroughly, completely) **deceive you** - Although "**deceive**" is not in the **imperative mood**, in **context** it is clear that Paul is issuing a strong command. And this is a command that sounds down through the ages because "in the last days difficult times will come" (2Ti 3:1-note) for "many deceivers have gone out into the world." (2 John 1:7).

No one… in any way - There are two negatives in the Greek -- **me** = no and **medeis** = not (even) one, no man, nobody. One might paraphrase Paul's prohibition - "Do not let anyone by any means or any method lead you astray in any way!" Remember Ge 3:1 "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"" So Paul's phrase **in any way** refers to the manifold ways our Adversary has to achieve his one desired goal - to convince us to doubt the Truth of God and His Word of Truth. That's all it took for him to trip up Eve, and that is still his aim, an aim he will seek to achieve **in any way**! (cp 2Co 2:11+, Eph 6:11, 12+, 1Pe 5:8, 9+)

Hampton Keathley III adds that "The use of this word (**exapatao**) with the phrase, "**in any way**" reminds us of our need to be wary of the many devices of deception Satan uses to lead us away from the truth of Scripture. We do not know what promoted the false teaching or who was involved in its promotion. It may well have been misinformed believers who did not understand God's grace. Yes, even well meaning believers can fall prey to Satan's deceptions, being deceived and deceiving others. Surely, then, we need first to be like the Bereans who searched the Scripture daily as their index for truth (Acts 17:11-note), and second, in that search, we need to follow Paul's exhortation to Timothy in 2Ti 2:15-note and learn to handle the Scriptures accurately and carefully. Anyone who is not properly grounded in the truth of God's Word (see again Eph. 4:14-note) tends to be gullible, but the sad fact is that all people, including Christians, are too easily misled by impressive personalities and spectacular appeals. The **antidote** to false teaching is sound teaching according to God's Word. Thus, the apostle pointed them to the truth as it pertains to the **Day of the Lord**. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 Correction)

John Phillips quips that "In Greek (**No one… in any way**), two negatives do not make a positive as they do in English… It can be rendered, "Don't let anyone deceive you by any means whatsoever." The end-times deception will be so strong and so subtle that more than the ordinary degree of watchfulness will be needed.

John MacArthur comments that "There was really no excuse for the Thessalonians to have been so gullible, despite the seemingly convincing forged letter. They should have realized that Paul would not abruptly contradict in a letter what he had so recently taught them in person and in his first epistle. The Thessalonians' gullibility was an emotional reaction to the stress of their situation. However, truth is not determined by emotions or circumstances, but by Scripture. Believers must allow biblical truth and theology to

rise above every situation. (1 & 2 Thessalonians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

Deceive (1818)(**exapatao** from **ek** = intensifies meaning + **apatao** = seduce, deceive - see **apate**) means to beguile thoroughly, deceive completely or seduce wholly, causing one to accept false ideas about something, in this case the Day of the Lord. **Exapatao** is used to describe self deception ("let no man deceive himself" - 1Cor 3:18). **Exapatao** is used by Paul to describe how the "serpent **deceived** Eve by his craftiness" (1Cor 11:3) and again to relate that it "was not Adam who was deceived (**apatao**) but the woman being (thoroughly) **deceived** (**exapatao**) fell into transgression." (1Ti 2:14) Paul described how "sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, **deceived** me and through it killed me." (Ro 7:11-note) So we see sin and Satan as the "deceivers" which suggests the sinners who misled the saints at Thessalonica were pawns of Satan, who ever seeks to sow doubt on the Word of Truth, which causes the saints to doubt and fear. This is another reason our best defense against deception is to stay "tethered" as it were to the Word of Truth (cp Mt 4:4, et al).

In context, the Day of the Lord deception led to the Thessalonian saints quickly being "shaken in mind or alarmed." (2Th 2:2-note) Eschatological deception is nothing new in the church for there are always charlatans who make false pronouncements like **Harold Camping** who predicted Jesus would return on May 21, 2011, thereby disturbing saints not firmly anchored in the Word of Life. "And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds." (2Cor 11:14-15). They are those who are "walking in craftiness… adulterating the word of God" (2Cor 4:2), using "flattering speech (to) deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting." (Ro 16:18-note) In the last days (2Ti 3:1-note) Paul warned that "evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2Ti 3:13-note) Thus Paul exhorted believers "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming." (Eph. 4:14-note).

Paul used **exapatao** to warn the saints at Rome to be on the lookout for deceivers:

> Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they **deceive** (**exapatao** in the present tense = speaks of an ongoing effort to deceive!) the hearts (Interesting - not just their "heads" but their "hearts"! These guys are very persuasive, even charismatic!) of the unsuspecting (innocent, naive, simple)." (Romans 16:17-18-note)

Way (5158)(**tropos** from **trope** = a turning from **trépo** = turn or guide towards a thing, turn one's self, direct one's attention to a thing, be occupied with it) originally referred to a turn or direction. In this context it speaks of the manner or fashion in which something is done. So in context don't let them deceive you with "I have a word from God," "I have a letter from Paul," etc.

The saints at Thessalonica were fearful that they were in the **Day of the Lord** (the time of the Seven Year Tribulation described in Revelation 6-18). Fear (and its twin Doubt) robbed them of the joy generated by "looking (forward, with eagerness and anticipation) to the Blessed Hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:13-note) Instead of looking for the appearance of the Christ, these deceived saints would be looking for the appearance of the **Antichrist** (2Th 2:8-9)! How tragic! The church needs to continually be on the lookout for the appearance of her Bridegroom, Who will "sweep her off of her feet" literally! And such a hope fixed on our Bridegroom's **imminent** return would energize the church to walk in holiness, its members purifying themselves "just as He is pure."(1Jn 3:2, 3-note)

Hiebert observes that "Paul knew the persistence of error and realized that these deceptive teachers would not readily cease their efforts to make their view plausible, hence he warns against deception "in any wise," in any other manner than the three already specified (2Th 2:2). He was aware how readily many are attracted by the new and novel. Jesus connected such a warning against deception with His own eschatological teaching (Matt. 24:4, 11, 24-25; Mark 13:5-6, 21-23; Luke 21:8). As Home remarks, "it is amazing how gullible some believers can be when a new prophetic fad appears!" The antidote to such deception is a thorough grounding in the truth as revealed in the inspired Scriptures. Paul at once provided the needed corrective." (1 & 2 Thessalonians- D. Edmond Hiebert - anything by Hiebert is highly recommended!)

Keathley has an interesting observation - Though Paul was not directly discussing the timing of the rapture, the fact he was writing in the interest of the coming of the Lord and the gathering of the Church together to meet Him in the air, the implication is that the rapture must occur before this day begins. Why else would these believers be shaken by the idea that they might then be in the day of the Lord unless they had expected to be taken up to meet the Lord prior to that time? (Ibid)

Dr Thomas Constable (commentary - page 20) has a depiction of the confusion of the saints at Thessalonica:

EVENTS THAT MUST PRECEDE THE DAY OF THE LORD

Paul knew that the best defense against deception is the truth and so he proceeds to give the saints two events that must transpire before the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

For (**hoti**) is *causal* and could be rendered "because" which is a **term of explanation** that always begs the question of what is being explained? Paul now explains how they can know they are not in the Day of the Lord. **Vine** says Paul is "introducing the reason for his emphatic assertion that the day of the Lord had not already set in." Hiebert writes "**For** introduces the justification for the warning."

It will not come - These words are added by the translators. Most translations have "**Day**" instead of "**it**" because this is clearly a reference to the **Day of the Lord**.

> **Note** for a more technical discussion (beyond the scope of this commentary) of the significance of this phrase supplied by the translators (NAS = "it will not come") see David Dean's article under "VERSE 3" Does 2 Thessalonians 2-1-3 Exclude The Pretribulational Rapture?.

Related Resource:

- Detailed Discussion of The Day of the Lord

Unless - Some translations have "**until**" (NIV, NET, NJB) which means up to the point in time that an event transpires.

1. THE APOSTASY

The apostasy ("the Great Revolt" - NJB) - The definite article "***the***" (*he apostasia*) is present in the Greek text which serves to identify this as not just any apostasy, but as ***the*** specific ***apostasy*** which will occur in the future and precedes the **Day of the Lord** (See Ice's discussion on **the definite article**). Since Paul is seeking to prevent any further confusion regarding the Day of the Lord, it follows that this future **apostasy** will be very specific and very obvious to the believers who are alive at the time it transpires. "The presence of the article suggests Paul is not talking about just any rebellion or apostasy, but **something well known as a result of the teaching of Paul and his missionary team**." (Keathley - bolding added)

John MacArthur notes that Paul did not "have in mind **the apostasy** during the Tribulation, of which Jesus warned: “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold…. or false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Mt. 24:11–12, 24)." (1 & 2 Thessalonians MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

There are at least three interpretations of "the apostasy":

(1) A falling away from the faith by professed believers, to such a degree that it is a definitely recognizable event.

(2) An apostasy associated with the **Antichrist** which would be a definitely recognizable event.

(3) Not a falling away from religion but a departure from the earth, i.e., the Rapture.

> **Note**: **David Dean** actually lists 4 ways the apostasy has been interpreted - "What is meant by the *apostasia* and the “revealing of the man of lawlessness”? The term *apostasia* has generally been understood in one of four ways. **(1)** An appositive that refers to the man of lawlessness himself. (In this view only one event is in view: the “revealing of the man of lawlessness.” [**Ed**: View held by John MacArthur]) **(2)** A “falling away” from the truth, either by the professing Christian church rejecting the historic Christian faith or Jews rejecting the God of their fathers or non-Christians denying any claims of a superior being and instead proclaiming their own absolute supremacy. A wide range of **termini a quo** for these hypotheses is possible, reaching even before the opening of the seventieth week [**Ed**: Daniel's Seventieth Week] . **(3)** An active rebellion against God and the accompanying growth of ungodliness in the world at large. **(4)** The physical departure of the church in the rapture [**Ed**: See Thomas Ice below]. (Does 2 Thessalonians 2-1-3 Exclude The Pretribulational Rapture?)

INTERPRETATION #1

Thomas Constable favors **interpretation #1** writing that "Such a (religious) departure had begun in Paul's day (1Ti 4:1-3; 2Ti 4:3-4; Jas 5:1-8; 2Pe 2:1-3ff; 2Pe 3:3-6; Jude 1:1-25). However it had not yet reached the proportions predicted to characterize "**the apostasy**" about which Paul had instructed his readers when he was with them… When the Rapture (**Ed**: Referring to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture) takes place and all true Christians leave the earth, this **apostasy** will overwhelm the human race." (Expository Notes) (Constable also authored the commentary on Second Thessalonians in the Bible Knowledge Commentary).

Hiebert favors **interpretation #1** - The crucial **Day of the Lord** will not come "until the rebellion occurs, and the man of lawlessness is revealed." Paul is thinking of **two distinct although related events**. The two designations do not refer to "a single phenomenon" as Moffatt suggests (**Ed**: This seems to be the interpretation MacArthur favors - see below). The two verbs, emphatic by position, serve to distinguish the events. The **man of lawlessness** is not the personal embodiment of the rebellion, nor is he simply the personal culmination of the **apostasy**. Although the two events are clearly related as expressions of enmity towards God, they are yet distinct. The rebellion, or **apostasy**, indicates a tragic movement within the sphere of professed Christendom, the treason of the avowed friends of Christ, whereas the public manifestation of the **man of lawlessness** in the arena of history marks the personal culmination of the hostility of the avowed enemies of Christ." (**Ed**: But see discussion below where Dr John MacArthur links the **apostasy** with the **man of lawlessness**, stating that the ultimate apostasy is when he carries out the "**Abomination of Desolation**" described by Jesus in Mt 24:15-note)… A common view (of "the apostasy") is that the reference is to "the apostasy of Christians from their faith to error and unrighteousness." Since the context clearly associates this apostasy with the time of Christ's second coming, the reference portrays the end time apostasy within Christendom. Then "conditions will be ripe for people, especially those who call themselves Christians but are not really such, to turn their backs on God in what they do as well as in what they already have in thought." In this scene of apostasy, some would also include, or restrict it to, the Jews at the beginning of the Great Tribulation who will turn from God's truth to worship the **Antichrist**. Whatever the precise identity of these apostates, "this worldwide anti-God movement will be so universal as to earn for itself a special designation: '**the apostasy**'—i.e., the climax of the increasing apostate tendencies evident before the rapture of the church." (1 & 2 Thessalonians- D. Edmond Hiebert)

INTERPRETATION #2

John MacArthur - Paul's use of the definite article (**ED**: "the" in the Greek phrase "*te* ["the"] *apostasia*") reveals that he had in mind not a general flow or trend, but a specific, identifiable act of apostasy. The apostasy will be a blasphemous act of unprecedented magnitude. (**ED**: From what he says in the next sentence, MacArthur seems to be referring to the Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place - which marks the midpoint of the Seven Year Tribulation [Daniel's Seventieth Week] - see notes on Mt 24:15) The apostle identified the apostasy by naming the key character connected with it: the **man of lawlessness**. Understanding who that key person is is a prerequisite to identifying the apostasy event. (1 & 2 Thessalonians Commentary)

Notice that if MacArthur's interpretation is correct, then the **Antichrist's** taking of his seat in the Temple (2Th 2:4+, Mt 24:15+) would seem to mark the beginning of the Day of the Lord and also the beginning of the last 3.5 year **Great Tribulation**.

INTERPRETATION #3

Interpretation #3 is discussed below.

Comes first - First is the Greek **proton** which means first in time, order, place, rank, importance. In the present context it is reasonable to interpret **proton** as referring to that which is **first** in time or order. In other words, **first** "the apostasy" will occur, then the "man of lawlessness" is revealed, then the Day of the Lord.

John MacArthur notes that Paul "did not tell his readers that they would live to experience **the apostasy** and the unveiling of the **man of lawlessness**. Paul's point was merely that **the apostasy** will precede the **Day of the Lord**. And since **the apostasy** has not yet taken place, the **Day of the Lord** could not have arrived." (1 & 2 Thessalonians Commentary)

Various translations of **apostasy** - falling away = KJV, NKJV; apostasy = NASB, Weymouth; revolt = Williams, JB; rebellion = Moffat, NEB, LB, RSV, NIV; rejection = Phillips.

Apostasy (646)(**apostasia** from **aphistemi** = depart derived from **apo** = separation + **histemi** = to stand) is a noun which literally describes a "stand off" (or "a standing off") and thus is a departure, a defection or falling away. In English **apostasy** means the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief. The only other NT use of **apostasia** is where Paul was accused of "teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to **forsake** (apostasia) Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs." In the **Septuagint (Lxx) apostasia** is used in Joshua 22:22 (describes "an **unfaithful act** [apostasia] against the LORD"), 2Chr 29:19 (describes **King Ahaz** during "during his reign in his **unfaithfulness** [apostasia]") and Jer 2:19 ("Your [God speaking to unfaithful Judah] own wickedness will correct you, and your **apostasies** will reprove you").

There is one use of apostasia in the **Apocrypha**:

> 1Macc 2:15 records "The king's officers who were enforcing the apostasy came to the town of Modein to make them offer sacrifice." In other words **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (who many consider to be a foreshadowing of the endtimes **Antichrist**) was forcing the Jews to forsake their religion and become "**Hellenized**."

BDAG writes **apostasia** is "defiance of established system or authority = rebellion, abandonment, breach of faith."

Friberg adds that **apostasia** is "a condition resulting from changing loyalties = revolt, desertion; as a religious technical term; (1) apostasy, rebellion (2Th 2:3); (2) defection, abandonment (Acts 21:21)." (Analytical Lexicon)

Herschel Hobbs on **apostasia** - The basic meaning of the verb form as given in Arndt and Gingrich (A Greek-English Lexicon) is to cause to revolt or to mislead (cf. Acts 5:37). This meaning is found in the papyri for apostasia. In one instance it is used of the burning of certain title deeds by Egyptian "rebels" (apostatōn). In another rebels (apostaseōs) are mentioned as forcing their way into a temple. And supporting this use in the papyri is that of **Plutarch** who uses it in the sense of political revolt. (Preaching Values from the Papyri)

Gilbrant on **apostasia** -

> Since the New Testament consistently warns against apostasy, “backsliding, falling away,” it is rather puzzling that it is relatively silent in terms of a precise vocabulary connoting such action. “Apostasy” (apostasia) itself is used only once (of only two occurrences) in the New Testament in connection with backsliding from the Christian faith. The verb aphistēmi (861) serves frequently to describe such “falling away,” but it is used only three times for backsliding from faith in God (Luke 8:13; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:12). In these passages it actually means “to draw away” from something or someone. Its meanings of “cause to revolt,” “go away,” and “depart” can also be applied to apostasia to give a secondary meaning of “removal” or “departure.”
>
> **Classical Greek** - In classical Greek there are some related words which form the background of apostasia. The noun apostasis, “revolt,” should be noted especially, since it is an older synonym for apostasia. The noun apostatēs denotes a political rebel or deserter, or it could denote a runaway slave.
>
> **Septuagint Usage** - As noted, the word apostasia had no religious background in secular Greek. It acquired religious connotations initially in the Septuagint where it translated Hebrew words which occurred in religious contexts. Terms from this word group appear more than 250 times in the Septuagint corresponding to about 40 Hebrew words. Apostasis (Joshua 22:22; 1 Kings 21:13 [LXX 3 Kings 20:13]; 2 Chronicles 29:19; 33:19; Isaiah 30:1 [apostatēs]; Jeremiah 2:19), for example, is used for “departure from God” or “apostasy.” Even on the occasions when the Greek words followed their normal secular function, they, nevertheless, were colored by their context, and they acquired some new connotations. In Israel revolting against God was not the same as revolting against the Romans or Greeks. Here, a new, religious dimension developed. The apostasia word group could not describe the backsliding history of Israel without being affected by this. In addition, the words often translated Hebrew terms whose specific meaning was related to transgression or violation of the law of God.
>
> **New Testament Usage** - When apostasia was appropriated by the writers of the New Testament, its definition was primarily understood as religious “backsliding.” It is true that apostasia is used only twice in the New Testament, but the use could not be more illustrative and representative of the phenomenon. The first appearance of apostasia refers to the “abandonment” of the religion of Moses; the second time it probably refers to forsaking the Christian faith.
>
> The Christian leaders in Jerusalem told Paul a rumor had spread which said he taught other Jews “to forsake Moses” (Acts 21:21). Apostasia occurs here and carries with it all of the Old Testament understanding of the concept of “rebellion.”
>
> When Paul himself used apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 to describe the “falling away” (“apostasy,” NASB) which would come and which would climax in the last days, he understood apostasia to have religious connotations. He evidently called upon a word with a recognized meaning, because he did not feel compelled to elaborate or attempt to describe this event.
>
> The New Testament’s understanding of apostasia is rooted in the Old Testament. When Paul used it in reference to a final falling away, he was probably reflecting a thought commonly found in Jewish apocalypses. Judaism thought that immediately prior to the Messianic Age there would be a period of apostasy. They even spoke of an anti-Messiah who would present himself as a great deceiver and destroyer. These concepts were accepted, albeit modified, by Paul. He placed this final apostasy during the period prior to the final return of Christ. Since Paul spoke of “the rebellion” (hē apostasia), this implies that the subject was well known to his readers. The New Testament offers consistent instruction about this matter.
>
> It should be mentioned, however, that the earliest English Bible translations used a secondary meaning of the word in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. William Tyndale (about A.D. 1526) rendered it “a departynge.” Coverdale (1535), Cranmer (1539), and the Geneva version render it the same way.

E. Schuyler English (SEE ONLINE & SEE QUOTE BELOW INTRODUCING HIS 4 PAGE DISCUSSION ON APOSTASIA - Rethinking the Rapture, pp.68ff.) points to this in his exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and holds that the departure which must occur before the man of sin can be revealed is the departure of the Church (the "Rapture"). This would be a strong argument for a pre-Tribulation Rapture. He admits, however, that the primary Biblical meaning of the Greek word is removal from God and His truth through apostasy and rebellion. It seems clear that apostasia is used in a negative sense, thus few would accept the possibility of a reference to the Rapture here.

> **EDITORIAL COMMENT - QUOTE FROM E. SCHUYLER ENGLISH PAGE 67** - *We suggest, for prayerful deliberation, a deviation from the accepted translation and interpretation of this passage. It is never the part of wisdom, we believe, to discard traditional renditions of the ancient MSS unless we have reasonable proof to support our views. We shall, therefore, present, for consideration, such evidence as we are able to produce.*

It is evident from the New Testament that "**rebellion**" is not the same as a simple "**transgression**" (paraptoma). **Apostasy** comes as a result of a willful fall, a conscious withdrawal from God which results in a total rejection of Him and His revealed Word. Peter fell (Matthew 26:30-35,69-75), but we know he did not totally reject God, and he was restored (cf. John 21:15-17). It can be observed that **transgression** more properly expresses a weakness or an unwanted action, which consequently creates sorrow and repentance (cf. Matthew 26:75).

In contrast, Judas provides a tragic example of **apostasy** (Matthew 26:14-16), where there was **remorse** but **no genuine repentance**. **Apostasy** implies a decision to forsake godly service, and it despises and rejects the Word of God. Therefore, it is **a conscious, willful revolt against God's person and authority.**

That believers can be seduced into **apostasy** through false prophets is a frequent concern of the New Testament (Matthew 24:11; Galatians 2:4; cf. Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:3,4; 2 Peter 2:1-22). (Complete Biblical Library)

Colin Brown (NIDNTT - Volume 1 page 50) - **Apostasy** (Gk. apostasia, rebellion, abandonment, apostasy; from apo, away, and histémi, stand). The deliberate repudiation of belief once formerly held. An apostate is one who thus abandons Christianity. In the post-NT church apostasy, murder and adultery were regarded for a time as unpardonable sins. Later it become pardonable only after great (in some cases, lifelong) public penance

Below is the related study of **FALL, FALL AWAY** in the NIDNTT-VOLUME 1, PAGE 606 discussion of the root verb aphistemi (See also word study of aphistemi)

> **Fall, Fall Away - φίστημι** G923 (aphistēmi), trans. cause to revolt, mislead; intrans. go away, withdraw, depart, fall away; ποστασία G686 (**apostasia**), rebellion, abandonment, state of apostasy, defection; ποστάσιον G687 (apostasion), bill of divorce.
>
> **CL aphistēmi** (Homer), derived from histēmi, means trans. to put away, remove: (a) in a spatial sense; (b) from a condition or relationship; (c) from association with a person. It also means to turn someone (either privately or politically) against a person, to cause to revolt (Herodotus). Intrans. it means to remove oneself, go away; to stand aloof, withdraw from, cease, give up; recoil, separate oneself; to fall away. From it are derived the nouns apostasis, revolt (first found in cl. Gk., from the time of Thuc., 1, 122); apostatēs, deserter, political rebel (e.g. "against the king", "against the country"; a later term found in Polybius); **apostasia**, a late form of the classical apostasis, meaning, state of rebellion or apostasy (e.g. "from Nero"; "from the Romans"); and apostasion, a legal term for handing over at purchase, conveyance, and used of a bill of divorce (Deut. 24:1, 3; Matt. 5:31; 19:7; Mk. 10:4; → Divorce).
>
> **OT** 1. In the LXX words of this group are found more than 250 times, rendering about 40 different Heb. words, but most frequently hēsîr (hiph. of sûr), to remove (about 65 times). It is of especial interest theologically when used to translate forms of mā'al, to act unfaithfully, contrary to duty, or against the law (2 Chr. 26:18; 28:19, 22; 29:6; 30:7; 33:19); pāša', to rebel, transgress (2 Chr. 21:8, 10; Jer. 33:8; Ezek. 20:38); mārad̲, to rebel, revolt (Gen. 14:4; Num. 14:9; Jos. 22:16ff.; 2 Chr. 13:6; Ezr. 4:12, 15, 19; Neh. 2:19; 6:6; 9:26; Ezek. 17:15; Dan. 9:5, 9); → Sin, art. παράπτωμα.
> The meaning of aphistēmi and its Heb. equivalents is like that in classical Gk.: removal in a spatial sense (Gen. 12:8), separation of persons (1 Sam. 18:13; Ps. 6:8), withdrawal from a relationship (Num. 8:25) or from a state (Prov. 23:18; Isa. 59:9); political revolt (Gen. 14:4; 2 Chr. 21:8, 10; Ezek. 17:15). This is the most frequent meaning of the word and underlies most of the substantival forms.

A meaning not found in cl. Gk. is the use in religious contexts: God departs from men (Jdg. 16:20; 2 Ki. 17:18; 23:27; Ps. 10:1; Ezek. 23:18) and withdraws his gifts (Num. 14:9, protection; Jdg. 16:17, 19, strength; 2 Sam. 7:15, steadfast love; Isa. 59:11, 14, salvation and righteousness). The underlying cause is man's own wilful departure from God (Deut. 32:15; Jer. 2:19; 3:14; 17:5, 13; Sir. 10:12), and scorn of God's gifts (Num. 14:31, the land; Neh. 9:26, the law). This rebellion expresses itself in the cultic worship of other gods (Deut. 7:4; 13:10, 13; Jos. 22; Jdg. 2:19; 2 Chr. 29:6; 1 Macc. 2:19), and in ethical behaviour constituting disobedience towards God (Isa. 30:1; Ezek. 33:8; Dan. 9:9–11; Sir. 48:15; 2 Macc. 5:8). It is against this background that we should understand the exhortations to keep aloof from sin (Exod. 23:7; Ps. 119:29; Isa. 52:11; Tob. 4:21; Sir. 7:2; 23:12; 35:3).

2. At Qumran the act of turning away from the community and its rules is fundamentally condemned as apostasy. The literature of the sect sets down a two-year period of repentance for the apostate member who is willing to return (1QS 7:18 ff.); but anyone who has belonged to the community for more than 10 years is completely excluded if he becomes guilty of apostasy (1QS 7:22 ff.).

NT 1. In the NT this group of words is found only in Luke (aphistēmi 10 times and twice in v. l.;**apostasia** Acts 21:21), Paul (aphistēmi 3 times, and 1 Tim. 6:5 v. l.; **apostasia** 2 Thess. 2:3), and Heb. 3:12. Apart from Acts 5:37, only the intrans. sense is found. On apostasion → Divorce.
2. aphistēmi occurs in the spatial sense in Lk. 2:37 ("she did not leave the temple"). More often it refers to the separation of people: holding back from carrying out a punishment (Acts 5:38; 22:29); the withdrawal of Mark from helping Paul in his work (Acts 15:38); the departure of the Christians from the Jewish synagogue (Acts 19:9); the disappearance of supernatural beings from human presence (Lk. 1:38 v. l.; 4:13; 24:51 v. l.; Acts 12:10; 2 Cor. 12:8). In Lk. 13:26, 27 (citation of Ps. 6:8) believers are warned against unfruitful discipleship. By having set before them in this parable the possibility of being too late, they are called away from their speculative enquiry (v. 23) to face a genuine decision that affects them in their total existence. The man who fails to recognize and grasp the present hour of grace may one day find himself separated for ever from the Lord: apostēte ap' emou, depart from me (v. 27).

In 2 Tim. 2:19 aphistēmi refers to moral behaviour: "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Acts 5:37 mentions political defection.

3. Of theological importance is falling away in the religious sense. In Acts 21:21 (cf. 2 Macc. 5:8; Jas. 2:11 v. l.) Paul is accused of leading the Diaspora Jews astray by teaching them to disregard the OT law. The absolute use of **apostasia** in 2 Thess. 2:3 is a common expression in Jewish apocalyptic, with its prophecy of a period of apostasy shortly before the appearance of the Messiah (Eth. En. 5:4; 93:9). Paul locates this event in an anti-Christian period directly preceding the return of Christ. 1 Tim. 4:1 describes "falling away from the faith" in the last days in terms of falling into false, heretical beliefs. Lk. 8:13 probably refers to apostasy as a result of eschatological temptation. Here are people who have come to believe, who have received the gospel "with joy". But under the pressure of persecution and tribulation arising because of the faith, they break off the relationship with God into which they have entered. According to Heb. 3:12 (cf. Heb. 6:6 → πίπτω below; → Sin, art. παράπτωμα), apostasy consists in an unbelieving and self-willed movement away from God (in contrast to Heb. 3:14), which must be prevented at all costs.
aphistēmi thus connotes in the passages just mentioned the serious situation of becoming separated from the living God after a previous turning towards him, by falling away from the faith. It is a movement of unbelief and sin, which can also be expressed by other words (cf. the par. to Lk. 8:13 in Matt. 13:21; Mk. 4:17; → Offense, art. σκάνδαλον). Expressions equivalent in meaning to the warning in 1 Tim. 4:1 include nauageō, suffer shipwreck, 1:19; astocheō miss the mark, 1:6; 6:21, 2 Tim. 2:18; cf. also aperchomai, go away, Jn. 6:66; apostrephō, turn away; arneomai, deny; metatithēmi, change, alter; mē menein, do not abide, Jn. 15:6; art. πίπτω; → Lead Astray, art. πλανάω; and the pictures of defection in Matt. 24:9–12, and Rev. 13. As can be seen from a consideration of the Heb. words in the LXX corresponding to aphistēmi, it emphasizes strongly, like parapiptō (Heb. 6:6), the part played by the human → will in the loss of → faith. W. Bauder

Related Resources:

- Hebrew equivalent - Meshubah - turning away, apostasy, backsliding
- Apostasy - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
- Apostasy - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary Apostasy
- Charles Buck Dictionary Apostasy

- CARM Theological Dictionary Apostasy
- Holman Bible Dictionary Apostasy
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible Apostasy
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT Apostasy
- Webster Dictionary Apostasies Apostasy
- Watson's Theological Dictionary Apostasy
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia Apostasy
- The Jewish Encyclopedia Apostasy and Apostates from Judaism
- What is apostasy and how can I recognize it?
- Will there be a great apostasy / falling away during the end times?
- What is the mystery of iniquity?
- What are the consequences of nations turning away from God?
- How should a Christian react to all the doomsday predictions out there?

INTERPRETATION #3

While the preceding (and predominant) meaning of **apostasia** speaks of a "theological departure," those who hold to interpretation #3 feel **apostasia** refers to a "physical departure" (Rapture).

It is interesting that in the respected lexicon the the **TDNT** ("Little Kittel") the root verb **aphistemi** can mean "to remove either spatially or within a relationship." In Liddell-Scott-Jones (LSM) lexicon there is a long entry for apostasia with the first definition being "defection, revolt… esp. in religious sense." The second LSM entry is "departure, disappearance, Olymp.in Mete.320.2." The definitions that describe spatial removal (TDNT) and "departure, disappearance" (LSM) might add some credence to the hypothesis that the derivative noun **apostasia** is actually speaking of a physical (spatial) removal (as in the departure or disappearance of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture) rather than a religious falling away.

My view (even in light of my favoring a pre-tribulation or mid-tribulation Rapture) is that Paul's use **apostasia** seems unlikely to refer to the Rapture. In the context Paul is trying to clear up confusion. He has just used the noun (**episunagoge**) for "**gathering together**" in 2Th 2:1. It would therefore seem unusual for him to use **apostasia** to mean Rapture when he could have used the verb form (**episunago**) for "gather together" in 2Th 2:3 Nevertheless, a number of commentators (Thomas Ice [see below], Daniel Davey, Paul Lee Tan) have suggested that the sense of **apostasia** in this context is to describe a **departure** of the church from the earth (i.e., a Rapture prior to the Day of the Lord, thus a Pre-Tribulation Rapture), not just a **departure** from professed beliefs. **Mike Stallar** admits that while "the case is not conclusive… it should not be dismissed out of hand as many have done." (Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary)

Stallar goes on to add that "Couch points out that most conservative interpreters agree that **apostasia** refers in this context to religious defection. **John Walvoord** emphasizes that this is true even among pretribulational scholars who would gain by the alternative interpretation. Two reasons reinforce the standard interpretation as defection from the faith. **First** is the fact that all other occurrences of the noun **apostasia** in the New Testament and in the Greek Old Testament refer to religious or political rebellion. **Second**, one must take into account the close association of the man of lawlessness mentioned in 2Th 2:3. Since he is described in terms of wickedness and rebellion (2Th 2:3-4), it may be more likely that the thought of wicked rebellion is also the intended meaning of **apostasia**. Consequently, it is much more likely that the word refers to religious defection of some kind rather than the departure of the church." (Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary)

Dr Thomas Ice discussion of the interpretation of **apostasia** as identical with the rapture is intriguing:

> "I believe that there is a strong possibility that 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is speaking of the rapture. What do I mean? Some pretribulationists, like myself, think that the Greek noun apostasia, usually translated "apostasy," is a reference to the rapture and should be translated "departure." Thus, this passage would be saying that the day of the Lord will not come until the rapture comes before it. If **apostasia** is a reference to a physical departure, then 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is strong evidence for Pretribulationism… (Ice explains in his article) the word (apostasia) has the core meaning of **departure** and it depends upon the context to determine whether it is used to mean physical departure or an abstract departure such as departure from the faith." (**Read Ice's interesting discussion of the etymology of "apostasia" in The Rapture in 2 Thessalonians 2:3** - this article quotes the respected Greek authority **Kenneth Wuest** as also favoring *he apostasia* as signifying the Rapture).

I must confess that it would seem far more difficult to determine when the specific religious **apostasy** will occur (Interpretation #1), then it would be to determine when a "*rapture apostasy*" (Interpretation #3) or "***Antichrist** apostasy*" (Interpretation #2) would occur. Interesting! When the Day of the Lord is about to begin, surely the **apostasy** will be evident to all who have eyes to see.

John Walvoord alludes to the difficulty in looking for **the apostasy** as an indicator of the soon to follow Day of the Lord -- In the

twentieth century the situation is entirely different than it was for the Thessalonian church. **Today there is widespread apostasy**. The sad fact is that there are many who are not preaching the true Gospel and, moreover, are denying the central doctrines of our Christian faith. Some are teaching that Christ is only a man, that He did not rise from the dead, that salvation is not through His shed blood, and that He is not coming again. They deny that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and turn instead to some other forms of teaching. **To a certain degree, apostasy is already here** (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 The Revelation of the Man of Sin) (Bolding added)

2. THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

The man of lawlessness is revealed (the man of sin) - Note that the **KJV** has "**man of sin** (**hamartia**)" but the other Greek manuscripts have **anomia**. This is not his personal name but indicates the character of his person! Note that the phrase "**man of…** " is a way of describing one's predominant characteristic as "man of knowledge" in Pr 24:5 or "man of sorrows" in Isa 53:3.

Related Resources:

- Man of Sin - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Man of Sin - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament
- Man of Sin - Easton's Bible Dictionary
- Man of Sin - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible
- Man of Sin - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature

Man is the noun **anthropos** which defines him as an actual human being, not an angel, not Satan, not a sin or lawlessness personified, but alive in flesh and blood!

Guzik comments that a "traditional (long-established) understanding of this **man of sin** is to say that he is ***not*** an individual, but a ***system*** or an ***office***. Historically, Protestant interpreters have seen the **man of sin** to be the succession of popes. **Calvin** thought this way: "Paul, however, is not speaking of one individual, but of a kingdom that was to be seized by Satan for the purpose of setting up a seat of abomination in the midst of God's temple. This we see accomplished in popery." However, there is no good reason to see this **man of sin** to be other than what the plainest meaning is here – an individual who will come to great prominence in the very last days. This was how it was understood in the earliest days of Christianity. "The fathers understood the **Antichrist** to be intended, but of this person they seemed to have formed no specific idea." (Adam Clarke) (Enduring Word Bible Commentary 2 Thessalonians 2)

Most conservative, evangelical commentators agree that **man of lawlessness** (or sin) is a description of the **Antichrist**. (1John 2:18-note, 1Jn 2:22-note; 1Jn 4:3-note; 2 John 1:7). Recall that the prefix **Anti-** conveys two meanings: (1) Over against, opposite to, opposition to (Christ) and (2) Instead of or in place of (Christ).

Hampton Keathley explains that the **Antichrist** is also "known in the Bible by other descriptive titles like "the little horn" (Da. 7:8-note), the "prince that shall come" (Da 9:26-note), the "willful king" (Da 11:36-note), "the beast out of the sea" (Rev 13:1-10-note), and as the one who, standing in the future rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, will commit the "abomination of desolation" as described by Daniel and attested to by the Lord Jesus (Da 9:27-note; Da 11:31-note; Matt. 24:15-note). (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 Correction)

Charles Ryrie notes that "While we are warned that there will appear from time to time evil men in the world-and so evil that they may be called antichrists (1John 2:18-note)-this person is the personification of evil and the culmination of all that is opposed to God." (Come Quickly, Lord Jesus: What You Need to Know About the Rapture)

Vine says the name **man of sin** "is to be understood of a man over whom sin will have absolute dominion, the willing and efficient instrument of sin, cp. Romans 6:16."

Hiebert on the **man of sin** versus **man of lawlessness** - "**Sin**," the more general term, basically means "missing the mark," whereas "lawlessness" denotes the breaking of law According to 1John 3:4-note, "sin is lawlessness," hence the terms are readily interchangeable. The title "man of lawlessness" suggests that he is the very embodiment of the willful violation of the will of God… Sin has such absolute domination over him that he seems to be the very embodiment of lawlessness. The use of the Greek term **anthropos** rather than **aner** presents him as a true human being. Moore well notes that he "is not Satan (in 2Th 2:9 he is distinguished from Satan), but he is the one in whom Satan's power is concentrated (2Th 2:9, cp the "Beast" in Rev 13:2, 5-note) and in whom Satan is to be unmasked." (**Ibid**)

"He is not called lawless because he never heard God's law, but because he openly defies it!" (William Hendriksen - Baker NT Commentary)

Lawlessness (458)(**anomia** from **a** = negates what follows + **nomos** = law) literally describes that which is without the law and

signifies, not merely the abstract idea, but disregard for, or actual breach of, the law of God. **Anomia** means “no law,” and emphasizes an attitude of disregard for the statutes of God, living as if there were no law. A person who rejects God’s authority doesn’t care what God thinks about his habits.

- **Lawlessness** is living as though your own ideas are superior to God's.
- **Lawlessness** says, "God may demand it but I don't prefer it."
- **Lawlessness** says, "God may promise it but I don't want it."
- **Lawlessness** replaces God's law with my contrary desires. I become a law to myself.
- **Lawlessness** is rebellion against the right of God to make laws and govern His creatures.
- **Lawlessness** signifies everything that is contrary to the will and law of God and is more intentional and flagrant sin. It is direct and open rebellion against God and His ways.
- **Lawlessness** describes one who has the quality of not being regulated by, restrained by or controlled by law. It is one who is not governed by nor obedient to laws and who is thus unbridled and uncontrolled in general, an excellent description of the **Antichrist**.

Hiebert on **revealed** - The verb "revealed," standing emphatically forward (*apokaluphthe o anthropos tes anomias o huios tes apoleias*), is in the **aorist tense** and points to a definite time when the veil will be removed. His revelation will herald the fact that the **Day of the Lord** has actually arrived. The importance of this revelation is shown by the repetition of the verb in 2Th 2:6 and 2Th 2:8. His public appearance in the arena of human history will disclose his true identity. The verb implies his prior existence on earth, for he will doubtless have been living many years before his manifestation as the man of lawlessness. (**Ibid**)

Paul’s point is clear: “You are worried that we are in the Great Tribulation and that you missed the rapture. But you can know that we are not in the Great Tribulation, because we have not yet seen the man of lawlessness (sin) revealed.” (Guzik)

Revealed (601)(**apokalupto** from **apo** = from + **kalupto** = cover, conceal, English = apocalypse) literally means to remove the cover from and so the idea is to remove that which conceals something. And so the idea is to "take the lid off" and expose to open view, a view which previously had not been known. It describes removing of a veil thus exposing to open view what was concealed. In this context Paul is saying the veil "covering" will be removed from the **man of lawlessness** so that his evil character and intent is clearly discernible. As noted above most commentaries agree that **the man of lawlessness** is the future **Antichrist**. The question that arises is when will the veil be taken off? There are two answers to this question, at the beginning of the Tribulation or at the Middle of the Tribulation.

Revealed is in the **aorist tense** and the **passive voice** which could be translated "being revealed at a point in time" Keathley comments that "This passive voice verb suggests that he will be present and very much a part of the political scene, but unknown as to his character and purpose until certain historical conditions occur that unveil his presence and whereabouts."

Charles Ryrie says "When **Antichrist** signs the covenant with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation (Da 9:27), he will be identified by some for who he is." (Ryrie Study Bible)

MacArthur explains that "The **aorist tense** of the verb translated **revealed** points to a definite time when this man will appear. It implies that he was previously present and known, but his act of apostasy will unveil his true evil identity; he will drop all pretense and the previously hidden wickedness of his character will be fully disclosed. God and the Lord Jesus will not have appeared as his enemies until the time he is **revealed**… After initially posing as the friend of religion (cf. Rev. 17:13-note), **Antichrist** will suddenly reveal his true nature when he commits blasphemy against God." (1 & 2 Thessalonians Commentary)

WHEN DOES THE DAY
OF THE LORD BEGIN?

Of David Dean's four possibilities only 2 are considered in this discussion (see Dean's note below).

Ryrie's revelation of the **Antichrist** would be at the beginning of the Seven year Tribulation which would mark the beginning of the **Day of the Lord**. On the other hand, **MacArthur's** interpretation of the time of revelation of the Antichrist's true character would be at the midpoint of the Seven year Tribulation, the point at which the 3.5 year **Great Tribulation** begins (see Mt 24:21-note) and presumably when the **Day of the Lord** begins. (See timeline depiction - scroll down)

The context would favor MacArthur's interpretation. Why? Because Paul associates Antichrist's revelation in 2Th 2:3 with his taking of his seat in the Temple (2Th 2:4-note) and his claim to be god, an event which marks the ultimate blasphemy against God. This event correlates with Jesus' description of the Abomination of Desolation (Mt 24:15-note) and this blasphemous abomination occurs at the midpoint of the 7 years when one compares Da 9:27-note in which the **Antichrist** breaks a covenant (probably a "peace" accord) with the Jews at the midpoint of the last seven years.

Note: **David Dean** lists **4 times** in which the Son of Lawlessness could be revealed:

(a) The appearing of the **Antichrist** as a world figure before the beginning of the seventieth week. (*Walvoord seems to hold this position*)

(b) The signing of the covenant by the **Antichrist** (Da 9:27). (*Pretribulationist Renald Showers argues that since (a) Scripture states that the man of lawlessness will perform a public act in the signing of the covenant, and (b) since Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3 that the rapture will precede his revealing, one must conclude that the revealing of the Antichrist occurs at the signing of the covenant - Maranatha, Our Lord, Come!*) (**Ed**: This is the view held by Charles Ryrie)

(c) The emerging of the **Antichrist** as a well-known world figure sometime during the first half of Daniel's seventieth week. (*Robert L. Thomas, a Pretribulationist, seems to allow for this view -- "2 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978], 322*).

(d) The event in which the **Antichrist** will desecrate the temple at the midpoint of the seventieth week (Da 9:27; Mt. 24:15; 2Th 2:4). (*H A Ironside*) (**Ed**: This is the view held by John MacArthur)

(Does 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 Exclude The Pretribulational Rapture? - Bibliotheca Sacra, Volume 168, page 206 - interesting, well referenced 22 page article which addresses pre and post tribulation views)

To summarize, at the beginning of the seven year Tribulation, the **man of lawlessness** masquerades as a man of peace (cp rider on white horse with a bow but no arrow - Rev 6:2-note), but when he breaks the covenant in the middle of the seven years, it is at this time that his lawless character becomes fully revealed. In other words in the first 3.5 years while he might have been recognized by some who knew their Bible, his lawless, sinful character had not yet been fully revealed to the world. Notice also that if this is the correct interpretation, it follows that the actual Day of the Lord does not begin until the midpoint of Daniel's seventieth week. Note that Acts 2:20 gives details of other events that must occur before the Day of the Lord ("THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, **BEFORE** THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS **DAY OF THE LORD** SHALL COME.") which would also make it difficult to place the beginning of the Day of the Lord at the first part of Daniel's 70th week, before the Tribulation begins (e.g., not until the breaking of the Sixth Seal does John say "the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood." - Rev 6:12-note). Others who favor a pre-tribulation Rapture, feel the Day of the Lord begins at the beginning of the seven year Tribulation. **See diagram and discussion of Day of the Lord**.

THE SON OF DESTRUCTION

The son of destruction (son of perdition = KJV) - Similar to the expression "**man of** _____" the expression "**son of** _____" is a idiomatic way (common in Hebrew) of highlighting one's nature (in this case his destiny! cp Lk 10:6+, 1Sa 20:31). For example, in 1Th 5:5 Paul differentiates between "sons of light and day" (cp Jn 12:36) versus those who are "of night" and "darkness." (cp "sons of disobedience" Eph 2:2, Eph 5:6). In the present context, this phrase points to this man's ultimate destiny of destruction. A few commentators feel this name is indicative of what he will accomplish (destruction).

Keathley adds that "**son of**" was a Hebrew idiomatic way to signify "He belongs to a class described by the attached phrase, i.e., one destined for destruction as was the case with Judas, another who was called "the son of destruction" (John 17:12; Acts 1:25)."

Vine adds that "if 'man of lawlessness' refers to character, then "son of perdition" refers to the proper destiny of such a one, who, like Judas, must "go to his own place," Acts 1.25, cp. Phil. 3.19, and Rev. 17.8,11."

Moffatt says the phrase "son of destruction" essentially means *the doomed one*.

Ray Stedman writes - the "Hopelessly Lost One,"… is what the phrase "the son of perdition" means.

The **Antichrist's** characterization as the **son of destruction** reminds us of **Judas** who foreshadowed the Antichrist and was called "**the son of perdition**" (Jn 17:12) where **perdition** is the same Greek noun (**apoleia**) as **destruction**.

MacArthur adds "The title (son of perdition) is thus reserved for the two vilest people in human history, controlled by Satan (Jn 13:2; Rev. 13:2) and guilty of the two most heinous acts of apostasy… Monstrous as that apostasy was, it pales in comparison to the act of future apostasy **Antichrist** will commit. Judas betrayed the Son of God; Antichrist will proclaim himself God. Judas desecrated the temple with the money he received for betraying Christ (Matt. 27:5); Antichrist will desecrate the temple by committing the abomination of desolation (Matt. 24:15). Judas, apparently without influencing others, went astray, a tragic, solitary disaster (Acts 1:18–19); Antichrist will lead the world astray into destruction (Rev. 13:5–8)." (1 & 2 Thessalonians Commentary)

Destruction (perdition) (684)(**apoleia** from **apo** = marker of separation, away from + **olethros** = ruin, death but not annihilation)

means utter and hopeless loss of all that gives worth to existence. **Apoleia** paints the sad, tragic picture of a thoroughly, eternally doomed and wasted life! And that contrary to popular opinion **apoleia** does not refer to extinction or annihilation or the end of existence, but to total ruin so far as the purpose of existence is concerned. Sadly those relegated to eternal destruction will be eternally conscious of the fact that they wasted their life and the one chance they had to receive salvation in the Name of Jesus (cp Acts 4:12)!

Paul used the root noun **olethros** in 2Th 1:9 in his "definition" of hell explaining that "those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus… will pay the penalty of eternal **destruction** (**olethros**), away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." (2Th 1:8,9)

In this same chapter Paul writes that the "lawless one (the **Antichrist**)" will be slain "with the breath of (the Lord's) mouth" and brought "to an end by the appearance of (the Lord's) coming." (2Th 2:8) John describes the end of the **Antichrist** (aka "the Beast") when Jesus returns - "the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet… these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." (Rev 19:20-note, cp Rev 20:10-note) In short this man will not suffer loss of being but of well-being… forever in an everlasting state of torment and death!

MacArthur - He is fixed for punishment and judgment; he is human trash for the garbage dump of hell. (Ibid)

Related Resources:

- Perdition - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Perdition - Holman Bible Dictionary
- Perdition - Fausset's Bible Dictionary
- Perdition - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible
- Perdition - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Perdition - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature

John Phillips compares the Christ and the Antichrist:

THE CHRIST COMPARED WITH ANTI-CHRIST			
CHRIST		**ANTICHRIST**	
1.	Is-was-is to come (Rev. 1:18)	1.	Was-is not-shall ascend (Rev. 17:8)
2.	3-year ministry	2.	3 1/2 year monarchy
3.	The coming One (Matt. 25:13)	3.	the coming one (2Th. 2:3)
4.	The church's hope (Titus 2:13)	4.	The world's hope (Rev. 13:3-4)
5.	Prince of Princes (Dan. 8:25)	5.	The coming prince (Dan. 9:26)
6.	Many Diadems (Rev. 19:12)	6.	Ten diadems (Rev. 13:1)
7.	Has a bride-mystic New Jerusalem	7.	Has a bride-mystery Babylon
8.	Indwelt by God (John 3:34)	8.	Indwelt by Satan (Rev. 13:2)
9.	A slain Man, risen (Luke 24:34)	9.	A slain man, risen (Rev. 13:3)
10.	God manifest in flesh works many miracles	10.	Satan manifest in flesh works many miracles
CONTRASTS WITH CHRIST			

1. From above (John 6:38) 2. Came in Father's name (John 5:43) 3. Humbled Himself (Phil. 2:8) 4. Despised (Isa. 53:3) 5. Did Father's will (John 6:38) 6. Exalted by God (Phil. 2:9) 7. Came to save (Luke 19:10) 8. The Good Shepherd (John 10:4-15) 9. The Truth (John 14:6) 10. The Holy One (Acts 3:14) 11. Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3) 12. Son of God (Luke 1:35) 13. Mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16) 14. Seed of the woman (Ge 3:15) 15. The Lamb (John 1:36) 16. Loves and saves His bride (Eph. 5:25) 17. Refused power from Satan (Matt. 4:8-10) 18. Jesus has a name above all names with a numeric value of 888	1. From below (Rev. 11:7) 2. Comes in his own name (John 5:43) 3. Exalts himself (2Th. 2:4) 4. Admired (Rev. 13:3-4) 5. Does his own will (Dan. 11:36) 6. Cast down by God (Rev. 19:20) 7. Comes to destroy (Dan. 8:24) 8. The false shepherd (Zech. 11:16-17) 9. The lie (2Th. 2:11) 10. The lawless one (2Th 2:11) 11. Man of Sin (2Th 2:3) 12. Son of perdition (2Th. 2:3) 13. Mystery of iniquity (2Th 2:7) 14. Seed of the serpent (Ge 3:15) 15. The Beast (Rev. 13:1) 16. Hates and destroys his bride (Rev. 17:16) 17. Receives power from Satan (Rev. 13:2-7) 18. Antichrist will have a name with a numeric value of 666

See Another More In Depth Comparison — of Christ and Antichrist