

WHILE WE WAIT
(Living for Jesus in the Days Before His Return)
2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

The apostle Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit has confirmed that Christians will not enter into the 'Day of The Lord' or the 7-year Tribulation Period. His letter to the young church at Thessalonica proved that the persecution they were experiencing was not the awesome day of judgment just before Christ's second coming to earth.

Although the suffering they were going through was difficult (*2 Thessalonians 1*), it was not God's coming wrath of the tribulation, but simply the wrath of unsaved evil men against them because of their faith in Christ. In the first few verses Paul tells of two significant public events that must happen if indeed the Day of The Lord has commenced:

- 1) a massive defection from biblical Christianity (the apostasy) and
- 2) the public revelation of the coming anti-Christ in the last days (*2:1-4*).

Neither of these things was happening (nor have they ever, to date) because the Holy Spirit was/is restraining all last days prophetic events like these from happening prematurely (*2:5-7*). When it is precisely the right time on God's calendar for the Church Age to begin (*Acts 17:30-31*) (in which the Holy Spirit will remove the Church and lift His restraint on Satanic evil in the world) the anti-Christ will be revealed. Then there will be an immediate massive defection of unsaved religious people from defunct Christendom to the anti-Christ and his religious leader, the false prophet (*2:8-12*).

In contrast to the evil deception that will fill the earth in the last days, the Thessalonians (and all believers of the Church Age) are to wait in gracious anticipation of the Lord's return (*2:13-17*).

Contrasting the Saved and the Lost
In the Last Days

<u>Non-Christians:</u>	<u>Christians:</u>
<i>(staying for the Tribulation)</i>	<i>(waiting for the evacuation)</i>
v10 'choosing unto deception' (perdition & degeneration)	v13 'chosen for salvation' (election & sanctification)
v11 'caught with the lie' (doubt & deception)	v14 'called to believe the gospel' (faith & regeneration)
v12 'condemned for unrighteousness' (guilt & disgrace)	v15 'committed through faithfulness' (growth in grace)

Paul's main point is that Church Age Christians are destined for glory (*v 14*) while only non-Christians are destined for the Tribulation Period. Believers are drawn to follow, obey and love the Lord Jesus Christ; while unbelievers will love and follow anti-Christ. Disciples of the Lord Jesus are always progressing in grace and holiness, while lost souls are always getting more and more unrighteous. Thus, the two purposes of God at the start of the Tribulation:

- 1) to take believers away from judgment and
- 2) allow those who reject Him to enter into His wrath.

'Blessed Re-Assurance'

(God's Gift of Eternal Security for Believers)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

*"...knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.
For our gospel did not come to you in word only,
but in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance..."*
1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

We Are Chosen to Experience Saving Faith

(Selected for salvation and sanctification)

*"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God from the beginning chose you for salvation** through sanctification by the Spirit, and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."* **2:13-14**

We Are Chosen to Enjoy Stabilizing Hope

(Selected for steadfastness and stability)

*"Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold **the traditions which you were taught**, whether by word or our epistle. Now **may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and our God and Father, Who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace...**"* **2:15-16**

We Are Chosen to Exercise Sacrificial Love

(Selected for serenity, submission and service)

*"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and our God and Father...**comfort your hearts** and **establish you in every good word and work.**"* **2:16-17**