

A STUDY OF THE APOSTASY AND THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS
IN 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In addition to standard biblical abbreviations found in the Journal of Biblical Literature, the following list is given to help identify abbreviations of recurring items:

DOL	The Day of the Lord
MOL	The Man of Lawlessness
NASB	The New American Standard Bible
NIDNTT	New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown
NT	The New Testament
OT	The Old Testament
LXX	The Septuagint
TWOT	Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Second Thessalonians 2:3 has long been one of the most controversial passages of the Bible. The diversity of interpretations attests to the fact that this passage is not necessarily a "cut and dried" case, exegetically speaking.

In the introduction to his article on the apostasy of 2 Thessalonians, House notes,

The disagreements are not confined to those who hold diverse millennial perspectives, or even different tribulational views, but they are found among pretribulational, premillennial scholars. Those who accept this nomenclature proudly, nonetheless differ about the details. Arduous exegetical spadework is still necessary to get the finer granules of theological gold.¹

Indeed, there are numerous disagreements over the meaning of ποστασ_α and the meaning and timing of the revealing of the man of lawlessness. For example, the noted commentator

¹H. Wayne House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians: Apostasy or Rapture?" in When the Trumpet Sounds, gen. eds. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene Oregon: Harvest, 1995), 262.

Plummer does not describe what the apostasy is except to say, "It must be apostate Jews or apostate Christians."² Concerning the man of lawlessness (hereafter, MOL), Plummer again offers little decisive help. He writes, "There is nothing in the construction to show whether we have two events which are to precede the coming of the Lord Jesus, or only one."³

²Alfred Plummer, A Commentary on St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (London: Robert Scott Roxburghe House, 1918), 46.

³Ibid., 47.

Lenski says that though he believes the apostasy is in the Christian church, "Yet some have thought of a Jewish apostasy, the Jewish national rejection of Christ, and also of the Jewish political apostasy from imperial Rome."⁴

On the other hand, Best says it is "hard to believe that as early as 2 Thessalonians Paul was so pessimistic as to envisage an apostasy of Christians; moreover, the New Testament [hereafter, NT] gives the impression that the elect will not fail (Matt. 16:18); certainly there is nothing in the genuine Pauline letters to suggest that he expected the church to apostatize."⁵

Bruce offers another interpretation for the apostasy. He suggests that a "general abandonment of the basis of civil order is envisaged."⁶ Bruce would also say that the timing of the apostasy is simultaneous with the revealing of the MOL. That is, the $\pi\rho\tau\omicron\nu$ of 2:3 means that both the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL must be coincident and, come before the day of the Lord (hereafter, DOL).⁷

⁴R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Columbus, Wartburg, 1947), 407.

⁵Ernest Best, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1972), 282.

⁶F. F. Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, vol. 45 of Word Biblical Commentary, gen. eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco: Word, 1982), 167.

⁷Ibid.

Marshall also holds essentially the same view as Bruce on the nature of the apostasy and the timing of the revealing of the MOL.⁸

Thomas, on the other hand, holds that the *πρ'τον* of 2:3 means that the apostasy must precede the revealing of the MOL and that both events are contained within the DOL, and not prior to it.⁹ Concerning the apostasy, he writes, "An illustration of this kind of apostasy was that of faithless Jews just before the Maccabean uprising." However, he himself believes that the apostasy refers to Christendom. He writes, "A similar defection of professing Christians is elsewhere anticipated" in scripture.¹⁰

Ryrie does not share Thomas' view, though. He teaches that both the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL must precede the DOL. Furthermore, the MOL "will be revealed at least to discerning people when he makes a covenant with many of the Jewish people (Dan. 9:27), and this will signal the start of the tribulation period."¹¹

⁸I. Howard Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 188-89.

⁹Robert L. Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 323.

¹⁰Ibid., 321.

¹¹Charles C. Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody, 1959), 104.

As this brief survey demonstrates, there are a number of opinions regarding the exact meaning of this difficult passage. There can be only one proper interpretation for this passage, and the lack of consensus suggests that a more thorough work is needed to determine the exact meaning of what Paul intended.

Importance of the Study

A detailed study of this passage is needed to answer questions like these: (1) What exactly is the apostasy? (2) What exactly is the revealing of the man of lawlessness? (3) When do these two phenomena occur? (4) Why was it necessary for Paul to write the Thessalonians about the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL? (5) What is the relationship of these two phenomena with the rapture of the church? (6) Do the rapture, apostasy, and revealing of the MOL all come before the beginning of the DOL, or do some of these events actually occur within the DOL? (7) If the DOL is an imminent event without any signs preceding it, as held by various commentators,¹² can there be any gaps between the occurrence of the rapture, the apostasy, and the revealing of the MOL?

This thesis will explore the answers to these important questions and present exegetically defensible evidence to

¹²D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 329.

support them. Specifically, the goal of this thesis is to interpret the two conditions Paul mentioned in the protasis of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 ("unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed," NASB). A correct identification of these two conditions is critical for a proper understanding of when the day of the Lord begins.

Apparently someone had taught the young Thessalonian church that they were in the DOL (2 Thess. 2:2). Paul's purpose in writing these words was to assure them that they in fact were not in the DOL. To prove they were not, Paul made reference to his prior teaching and how he had taught them that there were two identifiable signs linked with the DOL, the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL. His instruction to them was this: if these two signs have not yet occurred, the DOL cannot yet be present.¹³

Therefore, this thesis will examine both the nature of the "apostasy" (Greek, ποστασ_α), and the nature and timing of the revealing of the MOL. Much of the effort will be directed to the more controversial issue of the identification of the apostasy.

Limitations of the Study

As with any study, this thesis will be subject to

¹³Robert L. Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 320.

certain limitations. Only limited space will be devoted to a refutation of the idea that the apostasy is soteriological in nature. Limited exegetical evidence will be presented in support of the Calvinistic view of perseverance, and documentation will be provided for further support.

It will also be beyond the scope of this thesis to defend the pre-millennial position. A literal millennial kingdom is assumed along with the concept of a literal future temple during the tribulation period.

Exegetical evidence from 2 Thessalonians for a pre-tribulational rapture will be presented, but it will be beyond this thesis to exhaustively defend this doctrine.

Finally, because of the multitude of views that have been proposed for the apostasy, it will not be possible to exhaustively refute every single one.¹⁴ Some of these views have been proven to be false simply by the passing of time, while others are so lacking in exegetical basis that they do not warrant attention. In the section on the apostasy, each view will be listed with most of the space devoted to the more prevalent views.

A final limitation of this study is the fact that it revolves around a prophecy about which there is not full disclosure. Therefore, since God did not give complete

¹⁴Thomas lists 13 different views for the apostasy (Robert L. Thomas, ed. Exegetical Digest of II Thessalonians, (The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA, 1975), 63-65.

written revelation of all the details, one must bear in mind that final conclusions will be based partially on logical deductions from all the inductive exegetical findings.

Definitions of technical terms

A brief definition of certain technical terms and phrases will be given here for the more technical data.

The term "eschatology" refers to the study of last things.¹⁵ In this paper it particularly refers to the events which take place during the last seven years of this age (known as "Daniel's seventieth-week") before the return of Christ.

The phrase "DOL" will be encountered many times in this paper. The phrase will receive further explanation later in the paper, but for now it will be noted that it begins with and includes the time of future global judgement by God which comes during the last seven years of this age.¹⁶

The term "rapture" refers that event in which every Christian is gathered to Christ in the air and given a new resurrection body before being taken to heaven (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51ff.; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).¹⁷

¹⁵Thomas Finger, "eschatology," in the Holman Bible Dictionary, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman, 1991), 432-36.

¹⁶John F. Walvoord, The Thessalonian Epistles (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 117.

¹⁷Robert L. Thomas, "1 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's

"Hermeneutics" is a term which will be encountered at various places in the thesis. Hermeneutics are simply rules of interpretation.¹⁸ In the section that deals with the NT use of the Old Testament (hereafter, OT), discussion will be given to what constitutes legitimate hermeneutics for a study of this nature.

The term "type" will also be encountered at various places in the paper. Greater discussion will be given later in the paper, but a type is a person, place, or institution in the OT which in some way prefigures a NT truth (the antitype).¹⁹

"Sensus plenior" is another technical phrase that concerns the NT use of the OT. Sensus plenior literally means fuller sense, and refers to the concept that a NT citation might bring out a fuller sense from the OT passage, which was not knowable until the NT made that use of the passage.²⁰

The terms "peshet" and "midrash" refer to Jewish methods of exegesis around the first century. Peshet comes from

Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 275-80.

¹⁸Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, third revised edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 10.

¹⁹Ibid., 215-40; S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. The Old Testament in the New (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 53-70.

²⁰Walter C. Kaiser, The Uses of the Old Testament in the New (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 27.

the Hebrew term that means "this means." Midrash was practiced in different forms, but basically refers to some kind of rabbinical commentary on the biblical text. Both terms speak about the way that certain rabbis attempted to explain OT texts.²¹

One final note is that unless otherwise cited, all English Bible quotations will be taken from the New American Standard Bible.

Method of Approach

To accomplish the task of identifying the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL, the following methodology will be employed: chapter 2 will be devoted to a preliminary exegetical analysis of the verse itself. Throughout this whole process, the thesis will interact with the major views of the apostasy and MOL in a survey and critique fashion.

Consideration will be given to the introductory issues of Paul's missionary journey to Thessalonica and the doctrinal controversies which arose in that church. Though Paul certainly had other pastoral concerns, these doctrinal questions were a significant reason why Paul wrote each of the Thessalonian epistles.

Attention will then be directed to the lexical and syntactical challenges of the verse, including the absence

²¹Ibid., 6, 9, 12-14.

of key terms which have a direct impact on interpretation.

Considerable space will be devoted to the discussion of the term ποστασ_α. Αποστασ_α will be studied from a lexical perspective in order to determine a proper range of meaning.

Though morphology will be considered, it will not be the sole factor in establishing the proper understanding of the term. Rather, attention will be directed to the way the term was used historically. The study of usage will include the classical period (approximately 300-1,000 years before Christ), septuagintal usage (approximately 250 years before Christ), usage near the first century (as observed in the papyri), and New Testament usage.

Attention will then be directed to the second main condition in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, the revelation of the MOL.

This section will concentrate on the character and conduct of this man, and the manner and timing of his revelation.

Chapter 3 will deal with the topic of the NT use of the OT. Though an exhaustive study of the topic is beyond the scope of this paper, the purpose here will be to discuss key hermeneutical principles which may impact one's interpretation of 2 Thessalonians, especially biblical typology.

Chapter 4 will be devoted to a study in the Book of Daniel for possible relationships to 2 Thessalonians. The topic to be considered in this chapter centers around the content of Paul's missionary message. In other words, "What

did Paul use as a basis for his preaching?" Furthermore, can an understanding of what Paul taught help the interpreter understand the difficulties in 2 Thessalonians?

Chapter 5 will consider events of Jewish history during the intertestamental period. Special attention will be given to the exploits of Antiochus Epiphanes IV and what relationship he has, if any, to prophecies in Daniel and 2 Thessalonians (whether fulfilled in the second century or yet future).

Chapter 6 will then bring together all the exegetical findings of the first five chapters and recommend a proper interpretation of passage.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

The first exegetical detail to be examined is the introductory matter of Paul's communication with the Thessalonians.

Paul's Communication with the Thessalonians

Commentators are in general agreement that 1 Thessalonians is the earliest of the Pauline Epistles and that 2 Thessalonians was written only a short time thereafter.²² The epistles were written as a result of Paul's visit to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. Acts 16:1-

²²Robert L. Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 229.

18:22 records how Paul and Silas began the mission together (15:40), and were joined by Timothy a short time later (16:1). Verses 16:1-13 record how God revealed to Paul that He wanted the missionaries to direct their efforts away from Asia minor and into Macedonia (Europe), something that had not yet been accomplished by the apostolic church.²³

Verses 16:12-40 record how God led the missionaries to those who would become the first Macedonian converts of the apostolic community. After about two months of ministry in Philippi (which of course included the beating and imprisonment of Paul and Silas by the Gentile authorities), Paul and Silas went westward toward Thessalonica, about a hundred-mile walk along the Egnatian Way.

Thessalonica was a major center for that region with a population of roughly 100,000. It was founded by the Macedonian general, Cassander in 315 B.C., and named after the step-sister of Alexander the Great.²⁴ The presence of a Jewish synagogue (Acts 17:1) indicates that this important city had a fairly significant Jewish contingency.

Acts 17:2 tells how Paul, "according to his custom," went to the Jews, and "for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures." Worthy of special attention is the

²³Thomas notes that their departure from Troas (the western most point of Asia minor) was probably in March or April 49 (ibid.).

²⁴Ibid.

fact that Paul regularly preached from the OT.²⁵

As seen throughout Acts, Paul's custom was to go to the Jewish communities first and use Scripture to preach the gospel. It was not until a Jewish community fully rejected the apostolic message that Paul turned his attention to the Gentile community. However, even when his ministry was aimed at a more Gentile audience, it was still Paul's practice to use Scripture as the basis for his message.²⁶ The Greek version of the OT (hereafter, LXX) was probably the text that Paul used when preaching to those who did not speak Hebrew.

Acts 17 says that in Thessalonica Paul was preaching from the Scripture in the synagogue and was seeing people come to Christ until certain Jews became jealous and formed a mob to squelch the activity of the missionaries. The result of this persecution was that Paul, and at least one

²⁵A survey of Paul's ministry indicates that his teaching was constantly derived out of OT Scripture (cf. Acts 13:17-41; 17:2, 11; 18:28; 28:23). This is a noteworthy fact since the only Scripture available in A.D. 50 was the OT (with the possible exception of James which may have been written just a few years earlier (Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction [Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1990], 753). Lightfoot is also in agreement with the early date of these epistles (J. B. Lightfoot, Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993], 113). Lightfoot notes that both epistles are "very eschatological."

²⁶Thomas notes how 2 Thessalonians has a "greater use of the OT" and that the "increased use of the OT is easily explained for Gentile Christians who quite soon after conversion became conversant with it" (Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 302-3).

of his associates (17:10 only mentions Paul and Silas), travelled on to Berea where they could preach without Jewish opposition. Soon after this, Paul called for Timothy and Silas to join him at Athens (17:15), and the missionary team eventually made its way to Corinth (about December A.D. 49), where Paul spent about 18 months ministering to the Corinthians. It was from here at Corinth that both Thessalonian epistles were written.

Just as much of the purpose of 1 Thessalonians was to answer recent doctrinal questions (e.g., 4:13), so too, much of the reason for 2 Thessalonians was confusion over doctrine (cf. 2:1). Feinberg states that Paul's second Thessalonian letter was written about six months after the first epistle "to correct some false teaching that was troubling believers in Thessalonica."²⁷ What, then, was the doctrinal problem that precipitated the second letter?

Doctrinal Problems at Thessalonica

Bruce is correct when he writes,

If any section can be described as the "body" of this letter, it is 2:1-12. This is not only the most distinctive feature of 2 Thessalonians, it probably repre-

²⁷Paul D. Feinberg, "2 Thessalonians 2 and the Rapture," in When the Trumpet Sounds, gen. eds. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene Oregon: Harvest House, 1995), 298. Feinberg notes that "Paul is trying to save the doctrine of the second coming of Christ from some misconceptions that were held by the Thessalonians."

sents the purpose of the letter: what precedes leads up to it and what follows leads on from it.²⁸

Indeed, it is a misunderstanding about the second coming of Christ and the false belief that the DOL had already arrived which dominate this letter. That is, it was their confusion about the second coming of Christ which led to their false conclusions concerning the DOL.

Paul introduces his discussion in 2:1 with the preposition $\pi\rho$. Commentators point out that its use here is basically equivalent to $\pi\epsilon\rho$, and that the rendering "by" in the King James Bible is a mistranslation.²⁹ Paul is writing to correct their understanding of Christ's coming, so he appeals to his prior oral teaching to remind them about what events follow the first phase of Christ's coming (i.e., how the DOL follows the rapture). Other issues such as slothfulness (3:6-15) are only ancillary to Paul's main purpose.

Contrary to what some commentators have written, the problem at Thessalonica was not that people wrongly thought that the second coming (and the DOL) was near. In fact, as

²⁸F. F. Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, vol. 45 of Word Biblical Commentary, gen. eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco: Word Books, 1982), 162.

²⁹John Eadie, A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians (London: Macmillan, 1877), 254. Milligan agrees that "on behalf of," or "in the interest of" is the proper idea (George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953], 95).

seen in other passages, Paul did teach people that the return of Christ was near and that it could be expected at any time without sign or warning.³⁰ However, the problems at Thessalonica were due to the false belief that the DOL had already arrived and that they somehow had not been gathered to Christ before these events began. Though Paul's impatience over the matter can be sensed in verse 5,³¹ he nevertheless introduces the topic with the affectionate term "brethren" (δελφο), thus softening some of the mild rebuke which is soon to come.

In this first verse, one can take note of the grammatical link which Paul used to describe the coming of Christ. Using what grammarians today call the Granville-Sharp rule, Paul tied two nouns together (παρουσ_ας and

³⁰Paul taught the Thessalonians that "the DOL will come like a thief in the night," a fact that they knew full well, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:2. However, Paul also reminded them in verse 4 of that chapter that none of the judgements of that coming period would overtake them since they were "not in darkness" (i.e., they were spiritually prepared because of their faith in Jesus Christ). Paul explicitly taught that because the Thessalonians were saved (those who were genuine converts), they would not see the wrath of God which was to soon come upon the earth (cf. 1:10; 5:9; also 2 Thess. 2:6-10). Paul's word to the Philippians was "the Lord is near" (4:5).

³¹Ellicott says that Paul's emphatic statement in verse 5 was "reminding them, with some degree of implied blame, of the definite oral communications which had been made to them during the Apostle's first visit" (C. J. Ellicott, A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians [London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand, 1858], 106-7).

πισυναγωγῆς) together with the conjunction καί ("and") and used a single article to govern both nouns. As recognized by most grammarians, the significance of such a construction is that the two nouns really refer to the same phenomenon;³² that is, the gathering of the saints is a part of Christ's coming.³³ In referring to "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to Him," Paul was making an explicit reference to the rapture of the church, a doctrine which Paul had already taught the Thessalonians in 1 Thessa-

³²This position is held by the following commentators: I. H. Marshall, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 185; C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians (Shreveport: Lambert Book House, 1929), 242; James Everett Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), 244.

³³Thomas notes that some commentators wrongly explain the variety of relationships belonging to the παρουσία in the Thessalonian epistles as belonging to a single event. If Paul had taught that the Christ's coming was one single event at the end of the tribulation period, "the false claim that the DOL was already present could hardly have alarmed these Christians. According to this scheme, the DOL could not begin without Christ's personal reappearance. His continued absence was obvious to all" (Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 318). Hiebert comments on certain errors in translation due to a failure by the translators to understand that the παρουσία "involves the thought of a definite period" and is not merely a single event (D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians [Chicago: Moody, 1992], 329). William Kelly states the coming of Christ has "as first order the rapture," with the further and subsequent step of His presence being indignation towards the ungodly (William Kelly, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians [Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1974], 109).

lonians 4:13-18. Unfortunately, at some point after this, someone began teaching the Thessalonians a message which contradicted Paul's.³⁴ "By what methods was this false doctrine propagated?"

The methods of the false teachers

Though one cannot be absolutely certain of the methods of the false teachers, 2 Thessalonians does provide some clues as to what happened. In 2:2 Paul names three possible sources for this doctrinal error. They are (1) spirit (πνε_ματος); (2) message (λ_γος); and (3) letter (_πιστολ_). These three sources will be examined briefly.

Spirit. The word Paul used here is the term that is commonly used for either spirit (whether human or the Holy Spirit), breath, or even wind. Many commentators agree that here Paul is talking about someone who claims to have received a Holy Spirit-inspired prophetic revelation.³⁵

³⁴Ibid., 101. Kelly notes that Paul's message got confused by them and really remained confused by the church at large till dispensationalism brought clear articulation to a systematic teaching on the issue.

³⁵Cf. Charles A. Wannamaker, Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians, New International Greek Testament Commentary, eds. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 239.

Message. Paul's use of the Greek term $\lambda_{\gamma}\omicron\varsigma$ is probably referring to some general kind of oral statement.³⁶ Though the term can mean simply "word," its use here focuses on some kind of comprehensive message (i.e., a personal false teaching session by those who were deceiving them).

Letter. The third method that Paul mentions as a source for this doctrinal error is letter. Though some believe that Paul is referring back to 1 Thessalonians,³⁷ it is better to understand that someone forged Paul's signature in a false letter and misrepresented Paul's explicit teaching.³⁸ Second Thessalonians 3:17-18 provides grounds for understanding a forged letter to be the source of error.

Paul's words "as if from us" are best seen as applying to all three sources. He warns them to beware of any potential source of doctrinal error, regardless of its source or claimed authority.

The message of the false teachers

As previously alluded to, the message of the false teachers was this: "the DOL has come" (v. 2). Though some

³⁶Frame, Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, 246.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 319.

commentators perpetuate error by teaching that the Thessalonians were shaken up because they thought the DOL was near, there is virtual unanimity of opinion that this is not what verse 2 means. Most exegetical commentators agree that the last phrase of verse 2, ς τι ν_στηκεν _ _μ_ρα το_ κυρ_ου, must be understood as "to the effect that the DOL is present," or "has come."³⁹

By adding the phrase "to the effect" (ς τι), Paul gives an explicit statement to the Thessalonians that the DOL, in fact, was not present. By taking note of this false belief and the way Paul corrected the error, one can also come to the conclusion that the DOL does not consist of one single event or one single day. That is, the Thessalonians knew that the DOL was an extended period of time that began with the rapture of the church. Hiebert writes,

The day of the Lord, a term [sic] rooted in the OT, is likewise not a simple concept. It is not a single event but it is rather a period associated with the divine judgment upon sin and the deliverance of God's people. Neil remarks that it is "the traditional Jewish expression for the day when God would intervene

³⁹Ibid.; Henry Hamann, "A Brief Exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 with Guidelines for the Application of the Prophecy Contained Therein," Concordia Theological Monthly 24/6 (June 1953): 420; Marshall, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 186; Hogg and Vine, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians, 245. Hogg and Vine, as well as many others, point to passages like Romans 8:38, Galatians 1:4, and 1 Corinthians 3:22 for similar uses of the verb ν_στημι, or its cognates, to demonstrate that the meaning of this verb in the perfect tense (as here) is always a present meaning (called an intensive perfect).

in history to vindicate His chosen people, destroy their enemies, and establish His kingdom. The OT speaks of that day as a day of darkness and unparalleled judgement, a day of trial to men (Is. 13; Joel 2; Amos 5:18). It is a time definitely associated with suffering and the divine judgement upon sin.⁴⁰

John Walvoord adds further light on the subject,

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 judgement of the great white throne. The day of the Lord is therefore an extended period of time lasting over one thousand years.⁴¹

In summary, then, the false teachers had contradicted Paul's prior teaching (oral and written) by saying that rather than being raptured and escaping the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9), the afflictions they were now suffering were proof that the DOL had begun.

If the afflictions suffered by the Thessalonians are not proof that the DOL was present, what, then, are the legitimate proofs of its presence? In other words, according to the text, what kind of visible signs can one point to as irrefutable proof for the presence of the DOL?⁴²

⁴⁰Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 329.

⁴¹John F. Walvoord, The Thessalonian Epistles (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), p. 117. The writer is aware of varying views about the nature and extent of the DOL. For an excellent treatment on the subject from a different perspective than that taken in this thesis one can consult Richard L. Mayhue's article "The Prophet's Watchword: Day of the Lord," Grace Theological Journal 6/2 (1985): 231-46.

⁴²The point needs to be stressed that Paul is not setting forth signs which are to precede the rapture of the

Proofs of the Presence of the day of the Lord

In 2:3, Paul adds further weight to his warning about the sources of false teaching. This time he uses a double negative along with the intensified verb ξαπατ_ω ("to deceive") to warn the church about deception from any source or means (literally, "do not let anyone deceive you in no way"). This warning leads to an initial question which must be answered: "What statement should be supplied in the elliptical construction that Paul employed in this verse?"

The implied apodosis of verse 3

The NASB places the words "it will not come" in italics. Translators place words in italics when words are not present in the Greek text, but believed to be implied by the writer. Robertson shows little surprise over the absence of the words which make up the apodosis⁴³. He calls 2:3 "but a

church. They are signs which indicate the presence of the DOL. This first phase of the coming of the Lord (our gathering to Him) has no signs which precede it. The rapture is an event which happens without warning. The context of 1 Thess. 5:2 suggests that these events are inseparable in terms of chronology, with the result that both the rapture and the DOL come like a thief in the night.

⁴³The apodosis consists of those words that complete a conditional statement. For example, in the statement: "if you come, I will stay," "if you come" is the protasis and "I will stay" is the apodosis. In verse 3, Paul did not express an apodosis, so it must be discerned from the context.

sample" of the ellipses common to Greek. In his words, "we have simply anacolutha in 2:3."⁴⁴ Fortunately, in this case the context gives the interpreter ample evidence for supplying the missing terms.

Thomas makes a crucial point when he states that the supplied apodosis must be found in verse 2, the subject that was just under discussion. He writes, "Circumstances here justify a present tense in the apodosis, however, the carry-over thought from ῥστηκεν . . . being a prime consideration." In other words, the English rendering should be something like this: "the DOL is not present."⁴⁵ The mistake of many commentators, though, is that they do not carry over the exact sense in verse 2, but change it to a future meaning (i.e., "the DOL will not come").

Why is this point significant? It is because of the tendency of so many to insert a future tense idea for the apodosis in 2:3. Bruce, suggests the following: "that day will not arrive." Wannamaker says that verse 3 is talking about necessary events "preceding the appearance of Jesus."

⁴⁴A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 1202-3. Robertson says on 1202 that here we simply have a case of anacolutha, and on 1203 Robertson states that such phenomena are common to all languages.

⁴⁵Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 323. The verb ῥστημι has a perfect stem which when used in the perfect tense produces a present tense meaning. This is called an "intensive perfect."

Marshall, too, confuses the issue by wanting to supply, "that day will not come."⁴⁶

The practical effect of this error is that it could be seen to make an allowance for a gap between the occurrence of the rapture, the apostasy, the revealing of the MOL, and the beginning of the DOL. The futuristic idea would not demand such a gap, but it might be taken by some as suggesting one. In other words, if one placed a future tense meaning in the apodosis ("the day of the Lord will not come"), it could suggest a gap between the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL, and the beginning of the DOL (the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL are simultaneous as will be demonstrated in the next section).⁴⁷

Additional grammatical support for this reasoning will be presented in the following section. The observation that needs to be made at this point, though, is that a present tense idea for the apodosis must be carried over into verse 2:3 because that is the sense in 2:2.

⁴⁶Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 166; Wannamaker, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 242; Marshall, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 188. Wannamaker believes that only two events will precede the parousia of Christ.

⁴⁷For example, if someone said, "I will not become a pastor unless I go to seminary first and get a degree," there could be a gap between the acquisition of the degree and the acquisition of the new position. However, if that person said, "I am not a pastor unless I go to seminary first and get a degree," the grammar would suggest (or even demand) that there is no gap between the completion of the degree and the becoming of a pastor.

The proper relationship of πρ'τον and κα

A significant question that must be addressed concerns Paul's use of πρ'τον κα_ ("first and") in the protasis of 2:3. Commentators interpret this passage one of two ways: (1) The DOL is not present unless first, both the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL precede it;⁴⁸ or (2) the DOL is not present unless the apostasy, as the first event of the DOL, comes first, and then at a subsequent point the MOL is revealed.⁴⁹ As noted, the majority of commentators hold to the first position that understands both events as simultaneous. A few hold to view "2," and a few also hold that the grammar allows either view.⁵⁰

⁴⁸A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. IV (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1931), 49; Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 167; Ernest Best The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1972), 281; Charles C. Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody, 1959), 103-4; Hogg and Vine, Thessalonians, 247; Walvoord, The Thessalonian Epistles, 118-19; Frame, St. Paul to the Thessalonians, 250; Marshall, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 188; R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Columbus: Wartburg, 1946), 407; Wannamaker, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 243.

⁴⁹Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 320-23; Eadie, Thessalonians, 266; Ellicott, Thessalonians, 103; Milligan, Thessalonians, 98.

⁵⁰Lightfoot, Epistles of St. Paul, 111; Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 330; Leon Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, gen. ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 219.

In support of his belief in the second view, Thomas has written an article, analyzing the grammatical details of the passage by comparing it with similar grammatical structures in other passages. This article deserves attention.⁵¹

Thomas compares Thessalonians 2:3 with three other NT passages, Matthew 12:29 (Mark 3:27); John 7:51; and Romans 15:24. The gospel passages bear closer resemblance to the Thessalonian passage so only they will be considered.

The point Thomas wants to demonstrate is that these two verses support the idea that both of the conditions of the protasis in 2 Thessalonians come within the apodosis and that the $\pi\rho\prime\tau\omicron\nu$ means that the first member of the protasis has temporal priority over the second member, i.e., the apostasy comes inside the DOL and the revealing of the MOL comes sometime after the apostasy.

A close inspection of the synoptic passages, though, shows that these are not legitimate grammatical parallels. Unlike the Thessalonian passage which has nothing to indicate a chronological sequence of events in the protasis, both the Matthean and Markan passages have a $\tau\tau\epsilon$ after the $\kappa\alpha\text{_}$ and before the second member of the protasis. The effect of this is to explicitly make clear subsequent action

⁵¹Robert L. Thomas, "A Hermeneutical Ambiguity of Eschatology: The Analogy of the Faith," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 23/1 (March 1980): 45-53.

in the verb that follows. No such temporal particle is present in the Thessalonian passage, though Paul could have used such an indicator if he had wished to make a chronological sequence clear.⁵²

Secondly, it must be observed that the second member of the protasis in each synoptic passage is not a true second member. Rather, the second verb actually refers to the main action of the apodosis. Matthew 12:29 reads as follows:

"Or how can anyone enter the house of the strong man and plunder his vessels, unless he first binds the strong man; and then he will plunder his house" (author's translation).

The second use of plunder is only referring back to the main action of the apodosis. It is not a true second member.

John 7:51 does provide a good grammatical parallel to the Thessalonian passage. This passage is very similar to the Thessalonian passage in that it has a present tense apodosis and a $\pi\rho\prime\tau\omicron\nu$ and $\kappa\alpha\text{_}$ in a two-member protasis. The NASB reads as follows: "Our law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"

⁵²Frame, Thessalonians, 252. Frame says that because there is no $\text{_}\pi\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha$ ("then or afterwards") or $\delta\epsilon\ \tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu$ (second), and because $\kappa\alpha\text{_}$ may or may not be chronologically consecutive, it is best to say that "the two things are not identical, although they are apparently associated both essentially and chronologically."

Thomas says this passage "indicates priority of the former member of the compound predicate to the latter."⁵³ But does it really indicate this, or does it demand this? Consider these points: (1) the Jews had to hear before they could judge; (2) the Jews could not know what he was doing until they heard from him; (3) the moment they heard from him, they would know what he was doing and render judgement.

That is, they would not hear the facts and then come to know what he was doing at some later date. The hearing would produce the knowing simultaneously. At the moment they heard from him they would come to know what he was doing and render judgement. It seems, rather, that this passage could serve as a good support for the view that both events of the protasis are simultaneous and come immediately before the action of the apodosis.

Here is how these details relate to 2 Thessalonians: Paul told the Thessalonians that they were not in the DOL by giving them two proofs in the protasis for the non-presence of the DOL. The non-presence of these two phenomena would serve as proof that the DOL had not yet begun.⁵⁴ These two

⁵³Thomas, "A Hermeneutical Ambiguity of Eschatology," 52.

⁵⁴Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 320-21. As will be seen, though the author does not hold to Thomas' view that the members of the protasis are sequential and come within the DOL, it is still possible to hold to many of the same positions. Specifically, because of the present tense meaning in the apodosis, these two phenomena can occur immediately

phenomena would serve as definite signs to indicate the presence of the DOL due to the present tense meaning of the apodosis. The two phenomena precede the DOL, but only in the sense that the DOL would begin as soon as these phenomena have occurred. Paul had already taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 that the DOL will come upon the world very suddenly without warning.⁵⁵ If the DOL begins immediately after the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL, imminence can still hold true.

On the other hand, if a person did see the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness, he would have proof that the DOL had already begun. Paul did not tell the Thessalonians they would see these events. He simply reminded them that as soon as these two events do occur, the DOL would begin. This leads to the next question: "What is

before the beginning of the DOL so that there is no gap between the rapture, the apostasy, the revealing of the MOL, and the beginning of the DOL. The non-presence of the protasis means the non-presence of the apodosis. This means that the DOL can still come "like a thief in the night."

⁵⁵Thomas notes that "unexpectedness will mark the tribulation's inauguration." The period of judgement known as the DOL will come with "unexpectedness" just like "the period of labor pains just before childbirth" (Robert L. Thomas, "1 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelen [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978], 281-82). The important point to note is that if the rapture, apostasy, and revealing of MOL come at the same moment, or immediately in sequence without gap, then the DOL can overtake the world like a thief in the night. Harmonizing Paul's teaching in both Thessalonian epistles would demand, or at least strongly suggest, that those three phenomena occur immediately before the DOL.

the apostasy?"

Preliminary exegesis of ποστασ α

Numerous views for the meaning of this term have been proposed throughout church history. Thomas lists thirteen different views that have been proposed for the meaning of ποστασ α.⁵⁶ Seven of these positions see the apostasy as having already taken place (the preterist approach). These views can be easily dismissed due to the fact that neither the DOL has come, nor has Christ returned: (1) it refers to a revolt of the Jews against Caligula in A.D. 40; (2) it refers to a revolt of the Jews against Claudius in A.D. 50; (3) it refers to a revolt of the Jews against Titus in A.D. 70; (4) it refers the coming of Mohammed; (5) it refers to the French Revolution; (6) it refers to the rejection of Jesus as Messiah; (7) it refers to Gnosticism.

Thomas lists an eighth view which sees the apostasy as currently being fulfilled (the progressionist approach). This view can be easily dismissed because it is much too general and could not serve as a distinct proof for the beginning of the DOL.

Thomas lastly lists the five views which fall under a

⁵⁶Robert L. Thomas, ed., Exegetical Digest of the Epistle of Second Thessalonians (The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA, 1975), 63-65.

futurist approach: (1) the apostasy refers to the Anti-christ himself (abstract for a concrete); (2) it refers to the rapture; (3) it refers to a departure from God by the professing Christian church; (4) it refers to a revolt of the human race against God; (5) it refers to a future Jewish apostasy. These last five views are the more plausible possibilities and will receive greater attention.

House also has done a fine job of categorizing these major views, which he placed into four broad categories. Some of these categories are broken down even further into sub-categories.⁵⁷ These major views will be listed, with the most prominent receiving the more thorough critique.

⁵⁷H. Wayne House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: Apostasy or Rapture?," in When the Trumpet Sounds, gen. eds. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene Oregon: Harvest House, 1995), 262-69. An in depth study on the the Arminian view that ἡ ἀποστασία refers to a loss of salvation by a true Christian is beyond the scope of this paper, but an excellent source of information on this specific topic can be found in Robert A. Peterson's article "Perseverance and Apostasy: A Bibliographic Essay," Presbyterian 16 (1990): 119-25. Information on the Arminian position can be found in Robert L. Perkins' article "Two Notes on Apostasy," Perspectives in Religious Studies 15/1 (Spring 1988): 57-60; another article from the Arminian perspective is by I. Howard Marshall, "The Problem of Apostasy in New Testament Theology," Perspectives in Religious Studies 14/4 (Winter 1987): 75-81. Marshall says on p. 78 that, "the possibility of falling away cannot be excluded." On p. 80 he writes: "Both Calvinists and non-Calvinists affirm the reality of God's persevering grace and both allow for the possibility of apostasy in the Church." The reader is also directed to the pages which follow where objections are given to the "professing Christian church" view. Objection "three" gives evidence that Paul did not intend a loss of salvation idea.

Survey and critique of major views. House titles the first category as "an appositive." This means that apostasy is defined by that which follows, the MOL. Ellicott calls this "an abstract for a concrete," but the idea is the same, i.e., the apostasy is the MOL.⁵⁸ Eadie and Kelly are among the many who reject this minority view.⁵⁹

The second broad category that House gives is the "falling away from the faith" category. He writes, "A second view is that ποστασ_α refers to a religious defection or falling away in the last days, after which the 'man of sin' or Antichrist will be revealed." House borrows from Hiebert's words, who described it this way: "a deliberate abandonment of a formerly professed position or view, a defection, a rejection of a former allegiance."⁶⁰ House then proceeds to divide this category in three sub-categories: (1) the professing church; (2) Jews; and (3) non-Christians.

The first sub-category is perhaps the most common understanding of ποστασ_α found among dispensational theo-

⁵⁸Ellicott, Thessalonians, 103.

⁵⁹Eadie, Thessalonians, 266; Kelly, Thessalonians, 126. Kelly points out how the article creates a definite force which precludes this view.

⁶⁰Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles, 305.

logians, though it is by no means limited to the dispensationalist position.⁶¹ Hiebert's words elucidate the idea:

Interpreters are not in total agreement as to the precise meaning of these apostates. A common view 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.⁶²

Those who hold this position present as a main defense the idea that the NT makes reference to a future falling away within the church, or at least the professing church.⁶³

Since many respected commentators hold this view, it will be necessary to consider the validity of its argument.

Eight objections will be given as reasons for rejecting this view.

1. The cross reference method of proof-texting is

⁶¹Among the dispensationalists who hold this position are the following: Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 151; Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 321; J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 155, 215; John F. Walvoord, The Thessalonian Epistles, 119; Walvoord lists two possible understandings: (1) widespread departure from the true faith in God; and (2) the rapture.

⁶²Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 332.

⁶³Thomas, Exegetical Digest of II Thessalonians, 64. Thomas lists the following verses as pro-arguments for this position: Matt. 24:11-12, 24; Mark 13; 1 Tim. 4:1ff.; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 4:3-4; Jude 17-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; 3:3-6. These supports will be answered with the objections that follow.

wrongly used for supporting this position. A listing of verses used by many to support this view shows that none of the citations provide a firm foundation for a significant identifiable event such as this.

For example, Matthew 24:11ff.⁶⁴ refer to events which are particularly associated with the Jewish nation, and which occur in the middle of the first half of Daniel's seventieth week (already past the time that the apostasy would have occurred). This event cannot refer to the events of 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

First Timothy 4:1⁶⁵ speaks of general heretical doctrines which would begin coming into the church in the first and second century. These do not point to the apostasy which Paul referred to in 2 Thessalonians. They have been a part of the history of the church since the first century.

Second Timothy 3:1-5⁶⁶ foretells a general corruption in outward Christianity. This verse could be compatible with the concept of apostasy within professing Christianity, but it is too general to satisfy the demands of 2 Thessalonians (the same holds true for Paul's words in 4:3-4 of the

⁶⁴Ibid.; Marshall, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 189.

⁶⁵Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 331; Ryrle, First and Second Thessalonians, 103.

⁶⁶Ibid.; Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 331.

same book).⁶⁷

Second Peter 2:1-2⁶⁸ warns about false teachers who were about to come into the church and have a negative influence on those within the church. However, a study of Jude 4 (a book which is known to be very closely tied to 2 Peter) indicates that by the time Jude wrote his epistle, these false teachers had already come into the church. By the end of the first century Peter's prediction had come to pass.

Though these verses are commonly appealed to as the basis for an apostasy within the church (or even professing Christendom as many would hold), they fail to provide a convincing argument.

2. The second objection to this position is related to the cross-reference objection above, namely, that when Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians none of these other books had been written yet. It is an anachronistic treatment of progressive revelation to read these citations back

⁶⁷Best is correct in pointing out that "nothing is said about the extent of the apostasy but clearly it will be such as to be easily identified by Christians" (Best, Thessalonians, 283). Walvoord notes that "today there is widespread apostasy," and "to a certain degree, apostasy is already here" (John F. Walvoord, The Thessalonian Epistles, 120). The point that needs to be observed is that if apostasy (really just a general toleration for moral corruption) was present in the church by the second century and is here today in some way, how can that be an identifiable proof for the DOL?

⁶⁸Ibid.; Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 321.

into 2 Thessalonians. Based on the biblical evidence, the Thessalonians had no idea that these doctrinal problems were going to plague the church in the near future.

3. The third objection to this position is that Paul, rather than painting a pessimistic picture about Christendom, gave the Thessalonians every reason to believe that Christendom would prosper. One can take note of Paul's positive assessment of the church in both Thessalonian letters: (a) steadfastness is praised (1, 1:2-3); (b) they were Paul's crown before Christ (1, 2:19); (c) they were unblamable in holiness (1, 3:13); (d) they were God-taught (1, 4:19); (e) they practiced godliness (1, 4:10); (f) they were not in darkness so as to be overtaken by the DOL (1, 5:4-8); (g) God had destined them for salvation (1, 1:10; 5:9); (h) Paul's prayerful anticipation is blamelessness for the church (1, 5:23-24); (i) Paul saw the Thessalonians as faithful and worthy of the kingdom (2, 1:3-5, 11); (j) their belief in the truth, according to God's sovereign grace in election, was a guarantee for the salvation and glorification of the church (2, 2:12-14); (k) Paul's view was that "not all have faith," not that none have faith (2, 3:2); (l) Paul was confident in their sanctification unto Christ (2, 3:3-5).

Based on the abundance of positive virtues that Paul communicated to the Thessalonians, one must therefore reject

the view that Paul anticipated any such apostasy in connection with the church.⁶⁹

4. The fourth objection is that 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 does not revolve around ecclesiological discussions on the nature of the church. Though there are references to the rapture in some of the surrounding verses, the context does not suggest a Christendom based apostasy.

5. The fifth objection to this view is that Paul's source of teaching, as pointed out earlier, was the OT. It is crucial that one see Paul's teaching from the perspective of a man living in A.D. 50, and not a Christian living in the late 20th century.

6. A sixth objection is that 2 Thessalonians is known to be quite dependent on the OT for its background.⁷⁰ This fact makes it more natural to look to the OT for an explanation of the apostasy, especially when one considers all the Jewish elements within chapter 2.⁷¹

7. A seventh objection is derived from syntactical

⁶⁹Eadie, Thessalonians, 266. Comments such as Eadie's are shallow attempts at dealing with a difficult issue: "faith fled, love dead, hope collapsed, and the truth forsaken—all spiritual graces and energies fallen out of recognition and existence; God ignored, Christ forgotten, and the Spirit grieved."

⁷⁰Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 302-3.

⁷¹The words of chapter 2 bring to mind events prophesied to take place during Daniel's seventieth-week, a time that has special significance for Daniel's people according to Dan. 9:24.

observations in chapter 2, relating to the timing of all the events which must take place.

First, it must be remembered that the Thessalonians already knew that the DOL comes without sign and without warning (1 Thess. 5:1-2). Therefore, as pointed out previously, it is impossible that there could be any gap between the beginning of these eschatological events (the rapture, the apostasy, and the revealing of the man of lawlessness) and the beginning of the DOL.⁷²

This idea is confirmed when one notes of the order of events. In 2:3, when Paul listed the elements of the pro-tasis, the first one he mentioned was the apostasy, then the revealing of the MOL. As discussed earlier, the majority of commentators hold that the two phenomena occur simultaneously, with the possibility that they could be sequential.⁷³

⁷²Walvoord holds the view that there can be a gap between the rapture and the beginning of the DOL. In his Prophecy Knowledge Handbook, he states: "The time period begins at the rapture of the church, but the major events do not come immediately. However, if the DOL has progressed very far, there will be unmistakable signs that they are in the DOL" (John F. Walvoord, The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990], 492). Walvoord has a logical problem that is easily solved if it is acknowledged that there is no gap between the rapture, the apostasy, the revealing of the MOL, and the beginning of the DOL. They are all virtually simultaneous.

⁷³Frame says that because Paul did not use any kind of temporal indicator like πειτα or δε_τερον, and because κα_ may or may not be chronologically consecutive, it is best to say, "the two things are not identical, although they are apparently associated both essentially and chronologically"

The writer suggests that there is no chronological priority of ποστασ_α over the revealing of the MOL, but that they occur simultaneously.

Further weight for this view can be found in verse 8. Following Paul's reference in verses 6-7 to the removal of the restrainer (the removal of the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit through the rapture of the church),⁷⁴ Paul says that "then" the MOL will be revealed. Τ_τε, a temporal particle often rendered as "then," or "at that time,"⁷⁵ suggests that the MOL is revealed at the time of the removal of the restrainer. The particle alone would not necessarily demand this, but one should note that verse 8 makes no mention of the apostasy, which in verse 3 was listed before the MOL. The data suggests that for the MOL to be revealed after the rapture and yet not before the apostasy both events must occur simultaneously.

(Frame, Thessalonians, 252). Best asks, "Is there an order in which conditions must be fulfilled or events takes place?" He says that "first might suggest that the apostasy is to be followed by the man of rebellion, but it more properly applies to the whole of the protasis over against the unexpressed apodosis" (Best, Thessalonians, 281).

⁷⁴Numerous dispensational commentators hold this view with good exegetical evidence to support this conclusion. Cf. Renald Showers, Maranatha (Bellmawr: Friends of Israel, 1995), 106-7; Feinberg, "2 Thessalonians 2 and the Rapture," 306-8; Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 324-25.

⁷⁵G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 448.

Furthermore, both verses six and seven imply that there is a special God-appointed time when the MOL will be revealed,⁷⁶ but that as long as the restrainer is restraining, he cannot not be revealed. The most natural implication is this: as soon as the rapture occurs, the MOL must be revealed.

The conclusion, then, is this: there is absolutely no temporal gap between the rapture, the apostasy, and the revealing of the MOL. This means that there can be no time period after the rapture during which the shell of a professing church might come to reject its former profession of Christ.

8. The eighth and final objection is this: the apostasy must be a clearly identifiable event if it is to serve as a proof for the presence of the DOL. It would be nearly impossible for an apostasy of the professing church to be a readily identifiable sign to the Thessalonians.

In consideration of the preceding objections, this writer believes that dispensational theologians need to reconsider the viability of this view.

The second sub-category that House lists under "falling away" is a Jewish falling away. House cites Marvin Rosen-

⁷⁶Thomas discusses the importance of the contrast between the current restraint verses the termination of that restraint and the revealing of the MOL in 2:8 (Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 324-25).

thal as one contemporary theologian who has adopted this position in his recent book entitled The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church. The concept of a Jewish apostasy will be examined in more detail as the paper progresses.

The third sub-category House gives under "falling away" is a "non-Christian" falling away. Such ambiguity can be seen in Robertson's words: "It is not clear whether Paul means revolt of the Jews from God, of Gentiles from God, of Christians from God, or of the apostasy that includes all classes within and without the body of Christians."⁷⁷ Many of the eight prior objections can also be applied to this view. Another strong objection to this view is that the very nature of the term ποστασ_α suggests a rejection of something once affirmed. It is not possible for the world to apostatize, for it never had a relationship with God from which it could apostatize.

House calls his third category "revolt," or "rebellion." As House points out, "For some writers there may not be a clear distinction between ποστασ_α as being a 'falling away' or a 'revolt,' but a revolt or rebellion appears to imply a forceful active rejection of God, while defection appears to be more passive."⁷⁸ As will be demonstrated

⁷⁷A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures, vol. IV, 49.

⁷⁸House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3": 266.

shortly, it is difficult to see this word as mere disbelief.

The term connotes a willful act of rejection. Morris states,

The term . . . more properly signifies "rebellion." It is used, for example, of political rebellions and military rebellions. The characteristic thought of the Bible is that God rules. Thus the word is appropriate for a rebellion against His rule. . . . It includes the idea of forsaking one's former allegiance.⁷⁹

Under this category House places the following theologians:

(1) A. L. Moore; (2) I. Howard Marshall; (3) Leon Morris (though Morris' own words may preclude such a categorization); (4) David Williams; and (5) F. F. Bruce.

The fourth and final category House suggests is the idea that ποστας_α refers to the rapture. This appears to be House's favored position as he spends the remainder of the paper setting forth arguments which might support this understanding. He lists the names of MacRae, Ellisen, Lewis, English, Pentecost, and Wuest as those who have adopted this view.

Much of this argument is based on the etymology of the term and the usage of its cognate verb φ_στημι. As noted by House (in agreement with Gordon Lewis), "ποστας_α may rightly be translated other than 'defection' or 'revolt,' and refer to a spatial departure."

⁷⁹Morris, Thessalonians, 218.

The major problem with this view is that it attempts to make the usage of a cognate verb define the usage of the noun. Lewis writes,

The verb may mean to remove spatially. There is little reason then to deny that the noun can mean such a spatial removal or departure. Since the noun is used only one other time in the NT of apostasy from Moses (Acts 21:21), we can hardly conclude that its biblical meaning is necessarily determined. The verb is used fifteen times in the NT. Of these fifteen, only three have anything to do with a departure from the faith (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12). The word is used for departing from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19), from ungodly men (1 Tim. 6:5), from the temple (Luke 2:27), from the body (2 Cor. 12:8), and from persons (Acts 12:10; Luke 4:13).⁸⁰

House proceeds to present additional reasons why rapture should be the understood meaning. From a historical perspective, he notes that the Vulgate used the Latin term that means departure and that the earliest English translations used the term for departing.⁸¹ This is an interesting fact, but hardly convincing in light of all the lexical research since the fourteenth-century which argues against this translation.

He then presents lexical reasons why the meaning should support rapture. Again, the approach is to argue that the usage of the cognate verb may mean spatial departure; so

⁸⁰Gordon R. Lewis, "Biblical Evidence for Pretribulationalism," Bibliotheca Sacra 125/499 (July-September 1968): 218.

⁸¹House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3": 270.

therefore, this idea should strongly be considered in defining the noun. House also states that some lexicographers give a "secondary meaning" which is "not the normal meaning" that the noun may include spatial departure.⁸² Unfortunately, these proposed uses are not from the NT era and are quite obscure.

The strongest argument House presents is based up the context of the passage. House shows how Paul's argument in 2 Thessalonians (and 1 Thessalonians) lends weight to the rapture meaning. However, the evidence is more circumstantial and certainly does not demand a rapture meaning.

The lexical evidence which argues against this position will be given in the next section, but the reader is asked to take note of three well known theologians (among many) who have provided a thorough response.⁸³

In summary of this view, it cannot sustain itself due to the fact that the noun simply is not used in NT times for

⁸²Ibid. House mentions Liddell and Scott (Henry George Liddell and Henry Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised with a supplement by Sir Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie [Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1940], 218) as a reference for the classical period and Lampe (G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961], 208) as a reference for the patristic era. However, House strangely does not provide any examples in his chapter to support this evidence.

⁸³Paul D. Feinberg, "2 Thessalonians 2 and the Rapture," 305; John F. Walvoord, The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 125; Robert Gundry, The Church and the Tribulation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 115.

the idea of spatial departure. None of the apparent support from a contextual perspective is convincing enough to override the weak lexical evidence. This, then, is an appropriate place to consider the lexical meaning of this term.

Etymology. Etymology is concerned with the "study of the original form and meaning of words."⁸⁴ According to Robertson, etymology is the foundational aspect of lexical research. Αποστας_α is related to the verbal cognate φ_σ_τημι. Αφ_στημι is a compound verb made up from the prepositional prefix π_ and the verb στημι (with the basic respective meanings of "from," or "away from,"⁸⁵ and "to stand," "stand by," or "stand still").⁸⁶ Based only on the meanings of the roots, one could say that the term means "to stand away," or "to stand away from." However, as Robertson has noted that it is usage that indicates the range of mean-

⁸⁴Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, 143. Robertson says there is importance in "the student's seeing the original form and import of each word and suffix or prefix. This is not all that is needed by any means, but it is a beginning, and the right beginning." He believes that terms definitely are influenced by the addition of prefixes (such as the addition of π_ to στημι which underlie the noun ποστας_α), but he tempers this with the following words: "The resultant meaning of a word in any given instance will be determined by the etymology, the history, and the immediate context" (173).

⁸⁵G. Abbott-Smith, Greek Lexicon, 48.

⁸⁶Ibid., 219.

ings and context that suggest the exact intended meaning.

Uses in the classical period. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (hereafter TDNT) notes that ποσ-
τας_α is a later construction for the earlier classical term π_στασις, and that the term refers to some type of action, not merely the adjectival description of one's character.⁸⁷ TDNT states that the idea of rebellion as found in the classical period continues on into the LXX. It cites no evidence that the noun was used in a spatial sense in the classical period. The noted uses were rebellion in a political or religious sense.⁸⁸

The lexicon which best surveys classical Greek uses is Liddell and Scott. Liddell and Scott provide four categories of usage, the first of which is "rebellion" or "apostasy" (noting that the term is especially so used in a religious sense as "rebellion against God"). The second category is "departure" or "disappearance" (the reference here is to Greek mythology about Olympus). The third category given is "distinguishing," and the fourth category is

⁸⁷Heinrich Schlier, "ποστας_α," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 512-14.

⁸⁸Ibid., 513.

"distance."⁸⁹

Though there was some variation in early usage, even in the classical period the dominant idea behind the term was that of rebellion (political or religious).

Septuagintal uses. When one surveys the translation of ποστασ_α in the LXX, he comes to appreciate the richness of the term. Αποστασ_α is used for translating no less than four different Hebrew terms. For example, in Joshua 22:22 the term ποστασ_α is used for translating the Hebrew term _____. The context concerns the altar that had been erected by the two and a half tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan river as a memorial. The NASB translates the sentence as follows: "If it was in rebellion, or if in an unfaithful act against the Lord do not Thou save us this day!"

The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew lexicon (hereafter, BDB) suggests the meaning of "rebellion" or "revolt" as the appropriate meaning for this Hebrew term.⁹⁰ The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (hereafter TWOT) notes that the verbal cognate of _____ is nearly synonymous with the

⁸⁹Liddell and Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, 218.

⁹⁰Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979), 597.

verbs ____, ____, ____, ____, and ____, and that the basic idea behind the term is "rebellion" or "revolt." It states that the substantive ____ is found only once in the OT, here in Joshua 22:22. It adds that its use is parallel to another Hebrew term ____, which also carries the idea of "transgression," or "breach of faith."⁹¹

In summary, this term's use has a somewhat heavy theological meaning in this context. Αποστασ_α was being used to describe what was perceived as a rejection of the covenantal Mosaic Law. The words of Robertson are worth consideration at this point: "It is true that the NT at many points has affinities with the LXX, . . . but the LXX is not the basis of Christian Greek."⁹² In other words, the LXX is a good place to look for the understood significance of NT terms, especially those that were heavily theological in nature.

Another use of ποστασ_α in the LXX can be found in 2 Chronicles 29:19. In the prior chapter (28:19) the verb form of this term had been used to describe the way King Ahaz had been "very unfaithful to the Lord." The NASB translates of 29:19 as follows: "Moreover, all the utensils

⁹¹Victor P. Hamilton, "____," in TWOT, vol. 1, eds. R. Laird Harris, et al. (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 524-25.

⁹²Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, 96.

which King Ahaz had discarded during his reign in his unfaithfulness. . . ." It is here in 29:19 that the nominal form ποστασ_α is used. The Hebrew term translated is ____.

BDB says that whether it is against God or man, "unfaithful" and "treacherous" are proper renderings of the term.⁹³ TWOT adds,

Occasionally the root is applied to the faithless acts of individuals, . . . but mostly royal figures (Saul: 1 Chron. 10:13; Ahaz: 2 Chron. 28:19; 29:19; Uzziah: 2 Chron. 26:16, 18; Manasseh: 2 Chron. 33:19; Zedekiah: Ezek. 18:24). . . . It is the cause of Judah's exile (Ezek. 39:23; Dan. 9:7). . . . This word does not describe the sins of unbelievers, but of believers, covenant peoples, those who "break faith" with their suzerain.⁹⁴

Such is indeed the case here in 2 Chronicles where it is observed that Ahaz had "apostatized" by worshipping Baal (28:2), burning incense in Gehenna (28:3), offering infants to Molech (28:3), worshipping on the high places (28:4), and turning away from YHWH to seek Assyrian help (28:16), thus turning aside from the corporate covenantal obligations.

Additional insight can be gained by examining the use of the cognate term ποστ_ται ("apostates" or "rebellious one") in Isaiah 30:1. The context of chapter 30 revolves around Israel's failure to seek YHWH, and the resulting rebellion of making an alliance (30:2) with Egypt for her

⁹³Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon, 591.

⁹⁴Victor P. Hamilton, "____," in TWOT, vol. 1, 519-20.

protection. Verse 1 reads as follows: "Woe to the rebellious children, declares the Lord, who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, in order to sin; who proceed down to Egypt without consulting Me."

The Hebrew term used in this verse comes from the root _____. TWOT says the root

means basically "to be stubborn." . . . The root lays stress on attitude, whereas the synonymous _____ emphasizes rebellious actions. . . . Most often it portrays Israel's total rebellion against God" (Is. 1:23; Jer. 6:28).⁹⁵

From this passage one sees that Israel's apostasy, though certainly religious, can be theocratically political in nature due to the fact that they sought to "take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt" (Is. 30:2). Such a meaning is born out both by the context and the lexical meaning of the term.

The final OT passage to consider is Jeremiah 2:19. The context here is similar to that of Isaiah 30, for again the problem is that Israel is seeking refuge through foreign powers (v. 18). Therefore, God says in verse 19, "Your own wickedness will correct you, and your apostasies (_____) will reprove you; know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God."

⁹⁵R. D. Patterson, "____," in TWOT, vol. 2, 620-21.

The first of three terms used to describe Judah's forsaking of the Lord is the term ____. BDB says that this term can mean "evil" or "wrong," among other ideas.⁹⁶ It is a more general term that might refer to anything bad.

It is the second term _____ that is translated by πιστασ_α in the LXX. BDB defines this term as "turning back" or "apostasy," this usage being repeated again in 3:22; 5:6; 8:5; and 14:7.⁹⁷ Concerning this term TWOT says that it can be used for the idea of turning from evil and turning to good when God uses it to demand repentance. TWOT cites studies on the verbal cognate which indicate that there is "a total of 164 uses of ___ in a covenantal context . . . with Jeremiah leading the way."

TWOT also adds that the nominal form carries the idea of "backsliding," "disloyalty," and "faithlessness." Furthermore, its usage is generally in reference to corporate Israel (e.g., Hos. 11:7), and that "only in Proverbs 1:32 is _____ applied to an individual."⁹⁸

The third Hebrew term in this context which is parallel with the idea of πιστασ_α is the term _____. The NASB prop-

⁹⁶Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon, 948-49.

⁹⁷Ibid, 1000-1.

⁹⁸Victor P. Hamilton, "____," in TWOT, vol. 2, 909-10.

erly translates the Hebrew by the English term "bitter."
BDB adds that here the concept of wickedness is present.⁹⁹

All of these harsh terms are applied to corporate Israel because they preferred to "forsake the Lord" (LXX, καταλε_πω) their God, and "the dread of Me" (YHWH) was not in them (Jer. 2:19).

The entire immediate context concerns the fact that Israel was apostatizing from God by entering into alliances with foreign powers rather than trusting in God alone. The point to be observed is that according to verse 19 and its surrounding context, the septuagintal use of _ποστας_α is bound up in the idea of Israel's rejection of YHWH and their forsaking of their covenantal relationship with Him.

In summary of this OT survey, it has been observed that _ποστας_α usually carries the idea of unfaithfulness on the part of corporate Israel to maintain its covenant obligations to YHWH. Ideas such as treachery, unfaithfulness, evilness, wickedness, transgression, and rebellion are the typical semantical range of the terms which come to be used for _ποστας_α in translation, especially with reference to the nation as a body of people.

⁹⁹Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon, 600.

Uses near the first century. Two notable examples from the Apocrypha are worthy of mention. As in the OT, the meaning of ποστασ_α in the Apocrypha is that of Israel's rejection of her covenantal status with YHWH. Instead of trusting in YHWH, the people sought to build political ties with Gentile rulers.

The noun ποστασ_α can be found in 1 Maccabees 2:15. In this verse the English reads as follows: "In the meanwhile the king's officers, such as compelled the people to revolt (ι καταναγκ_ζοντες τ_ν_ποστασ_α), came into the city of Modin, to make them sacrifice."¹⁰⁰ The context is this: Antiochus Epiphanes IV was enforcing his policy of hellenization upon the Jews and sent troops into Israel to ensure that pagan sacrifices were being performed by those Jews who had aligned themselves with him. Pfeiffer writes that by December 168,

all religious observances ordained in the Law of Moses were forbidden in Palestine. . . . Under penalty of death, notably circumcision, Sabbath rest, celebration of the festivals. . . . The worship of heathen gods became compulsory, and altars for this purpose were erected all over the land. . . . The reaction of the Jews to these detestable measures and to the resulting religious persecution--perhaps the first in history--was threefold. Some, either through inclination or through fear, forsook the religion of their fathers and com-

¹⁰⁰Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, The Septuagint With Apocrypha: Greek and English (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1986). All LXX citations that follow come out of this version.

plied with the royal edict.¹⁰¹

Deeds of unfaithfulness such as these cited by Pfeiffer had been occurring for several years by the time that particular event took place. The events described above are recorded in 1 Maccabees chapter 2. It is important to note that 1 Maccabees had already made use of the term φ_στημι earlier in the book. Notice how chapter one speaks about these actions:

In those days went there out of Israel wicked [παρ_νο_μοι] men, who persuaded many, saying, "Let us go out and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us, for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow." So this device pleased them well. Then certain of the people were so forward herein that they went to the king [Antiochus], who gave them license to do after the ordinances of the heathen; whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen, and made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant [π_στησαν_π_διαθ_κης_γ_ας] and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief (1:11-15).

As seen in these five verses, the dominant idea that is present in the early chapters of 1 Maccabees is Jewish apostasy from the Mosaic covenant. This covenant unfaithfulness is exactly what is meant in verse 2:15 where the noun ποστας_α is used. These observations should be taken into strong consideration when seeking to determine the

¹⁰¹Robert H. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 13. The citation speaks directly about those actions of the Jews in 1 Maccabees 2:15 and deals with those who had, and were, rejecting the Law of Moses.

understanding of ποστασ_α in the NT era, especially in light of the fact that the LXX is one of the closest sources of literature to the NT era. The NT meaning of the term should be consistent with the idea of rebellion against a prior covenant relationship, especially the covenant relationship of Israel to God under the Abrahamic/Mosaic covenant as stipulated in the law of Moses.

This concept is further supported in the Book of 2 Maccabees, where the cognate term ποστ_της is employed. The reference in this passage is to that scoundrel of a High Priest, Jason. Jason was the High Priest who stole the priesthood through bribery (ca. 175 B.C.),¹⁰² and proceeded to persuade his people to apostatize from the Law by participating in Hellenization. Years later, after having been out-bid for the priesthood, he returned to Jerusalem to try and gain a following. Instead, as 2 Maccabees points out, he was "pursued of all men, hated as a forsaker (ποστ_της) of the laws" (2 Macc. 5:8).

Milligan adds additional insight about uses near the first century. He states that it is doubtful that the idea in 2 Thessalonians is strictly political (as it would be if the Jews rebelled against the Romans; such is one of the

¹⁰²Uriel Rappaport, "Jason," in Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 9, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971) 1291-92 .

uses in the papyri).¹⁰³ His basis for this is the dominant usage in both the LXX and NT.

He makes mention of Joshua 22:22 and 1 Maccabees 2:15 to reinforce the point that the word is "directly applied to rebellion against the Lord" (also citing 2 Chron. 29:19 and Jer. 2:19). He concludes by saying, "Whatever then the exact nature of the apostasy in the present connexion, it must at least be a religious apostasy, and one moreover, as the use of the definite article proves, regarding which the Apostle's readers were already fully informed."¹⁰⁴

New Testament uses. Gratitude must be extended to House for his timely article and its helpful collation of the pertinent exegetical data. Reference is again made to his article, only this time on uses of ποστασ_α (and its cognates) in the NT.

Conclusions are fairly easy to draw as one surveys the NT usage of the terms. Consistent with prior findings, uses of the verb are mixed between religious and non-religious

¹⁰³Milligan, Thessalonians, 98.

¹⁰⁴Milligan, Thessalonians, 98 (emphasis in source). Additional citations from first century or near first century uses can be found in House's article. Consistent with all prior findings is the fact that the verbal forms are frequently used spatially, while the nominal forms are consistently religious, political, or religious/political (House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3": 294-95).

uses, while ποστασ_α is always used with religious connotations. With reference to the former, out of fifteen NT uses, eight carry the idea of spatial departure or separation; four of the uses are distinctly religious in nature; and three of the uses concern a separation from personal relationships.¹⁰⁵ The four religious uses deserve a brief comment.

The first use is in Luke 8:13, where Jesus was telling the parable of the sower. Jesus is teaching how it is that some people make an initial profession of faith, but do not have a faith which results in genuine salvation. In reference to the seeds which fell on rocky soil, φ_στημι was used to describe those kinds of people who receive the Word of God with joy, but when temptation comes, they "fall away." The idea portrayed is a general kind of falling away of the unbeliever when that person's profession is tested.

The second NT use of the verb is in Acts 5:37. In this passage the Pharisees were debating about how to react to the apostolic preaching and its widespread Christian conversions. Gamaliel reminded his companions about Judas of Galilee, who had risen up in the days of the census with a

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 291-93. The passages cited which fall into those categories are listed according to each respective category: (1) spatial: Luke 2:37; 4:13; 13:27; Acts 12:10; 15:38; 19:9; 22:29; 1 Tim. 6:5; (2) religious: Luke 8:13; Acts 5:37; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12; (3) relationships: Acts 5:38; 2 Cor. 12:8; 2 Tim. 2:19.

message which "drew away some people." In this verse, the verb is being used transitively and carries a causative connotation. That is, he caused some people to fall away, or apostatize from what they understood as true Judaism under the Mosaic Law.¹⁰⁶

The third use of φ_στημι is a passage which some believe is related to Paul's use of ποστας_α in 2 Thessalonians. The NASB translates 1 Timothy 4:1 thus: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away (φ_στημι) from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." It appears that this passage is referring to departures from the Christian faith (apostasies) which were to happen during the church age, at some point after Paul's writing of these words.¹⁰⁷ In the discussion about major views on 2 Thessalonians 2:3, reasons

¹⁰⁶Feinberg notes that the term can be used transitively (cause to revolt) or intransitively (fall away). He notes that it occurs at least 355 times near the first century (Feinberg, "2 Thessalonians 2 and the Rapture," 309).

¹⁰⁷Kent says that the term which the NASB translates "later times" is "not the same expression as 'last days.' The term 'last days' or 'last hour' refers to that whole period of time beginning with the Messiah's first coming. . . . Yet it cannot refer solely to the second coming, for the New Testament indicates that we are now in the last days . . . which includes the whole period of time between the first and second advents, and prior to the 'age to come.' . . . This does not refer to the final apostasy of 2 Thessalonians 2, but to the intermittent experience of the church throughout this age" (Homer A. Kent, Jr., The Pastoral Epistles [Chicago: Moody, 1986], 143).

were already suggested why this verse is not a proper cross reference, so the issue will not be discussed further.

The final religious use of the verb in the NT is in Hebrews 3:12. This verse is one of many admonishments given to the Jewish community to which it was addressed. Hughes says that the warning is written to a Christian community, but under the assumption that there are still some within the group who have not been truly saved through genuine faith in the Savior.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the passage is a general kind of warning against disbelief, not dissimilar to the one Paul used in 2 Corinthians 13:5, but of little significance to the eschatological passage in 2 Thessalonians.

The data for the nominal term ποστασ_α¹⁰⁹ is limited to two NT passages, Acts 21:21 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3. It is interesting to note that the sense of the Acts passage, being the only other NT use of this term, is virtually identical to that which was seen in the LXX (both in the OT

¹⁰⁸Hughes says that the writer "still regards them as a Christian community; but a little leaven (in any of you) leavens the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6), and many can be corrupted by few. The immediate danger is that there should arise an evil, unbelieving heart in their midst" (Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 145).

¹⁰⁹There is a second nominal form in the NT as well (ποστ_σιον), but it is only used to talk about a divorce certificate. Feinberg states that the term "is found with a fixed meaning in both testaments. It is related to the breaking of the marriage covenant" (Feinberg, "2 Thessalonians 2 and the Rapture," 310).

and the Apocrypha).¹¹⁰

The background of Acts 21 is that Paul has returned to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey. After telling the Jerusalem apostles and elders all the wonderful news about God's workings, he was told about a problem there in Jerusalem. The NASB translates 21:21 as follows:

And they [Jerusalem Jews who have believed and are "zealous for the Law"] have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews to forsake Moses [_τι _ποστασ_αν διδ_σκεις_π_Μωυσ_ως], telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

The unmistakable sense of ποστασ_α here is that it is referring to Jewish apostasy from the Mosaic Law. The Jewish officials saw Paul's activities as a rejection of the truths that they held precious according to the Mosaic Law, and that for anyone to follow Paul it was seen as apostasy.

Summary of ποστασ_α. In conclusion of this preliminary study of ποστασ_α, attention is brought to the point that was made earlier, that within the term itself is an idea that is definitely religious. However, as it relates to Israel and her status as God's covenant people, the term can be broader and encompass a socio-religious-political idea.

¹¹⁰House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3": 293.

Just to whom and to what the apostasy refers, many are not able to say.¹¹¹ As the paper progresses, additional evidence will be brought forward from background studies in the OT which will assist in making an ultimate determination of just what exactly the nature of the apostasy is.

Preliminary exegesis of "the man of lawlessness"

Who is the MOL? What will he be like and what kinds of

¹¹¹Lightfoot says, "It must arise either from the Jews or from apostate Christians, either of whom might be said to fall away from God. On the other hand, it cannot refer to Gentiles. This consideration alone will exclude many interpretations given of the 'man of sin.'" (Lightfoot, Epistles of St. Paul, 111). Robertson says, "It is not clear whether Paul means revolt of the Jews from God, of Gentiles from God, of Christians from God, or of the apostasy that includes all classes within and without the body of Christians" (Robertson, Word Pictures, vol. IV, 49). Best says, "From the time of the Maccabean revolt (1 Macc. 2:15) it was used in relation to attempts by their oppressors to make the Jews forsake their God, and certainly some strands of Jewish thought believed that at the end there would be a great apostasy when many of the people of God would defect (cf. Jub. 23:14ff.; 4 Ezra 5:1ff.; 1 QpHab 2:1ff.)" (Best, Thessalonians, 281-82). Though Kelly does not adopt the position of a Christian apostasy, he does cite some key OT passages which point forward to a major apostasy, thus implying that the apostasy is Jewish: Deuteronomy 31; 32; Isaiah 65; 66; Daniel 7:8, 11, 25; 9:27 (Kelly, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle, 127-28). Feinberg, however, is willing to say what the term does not mean. He writes, "None of the uses of the noun in either testament indicate a physical departure of any sort. The point can be made even more strongly. If one searches for the uses of the noun 'apostasy' in the 355 occurrences over the 300 year period between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D., one will not find a single instance where this word refers to a physical departure. The uses outside biblical Greek are exactly parallel to those in it" (Feinberg, "2 Thessalonians 2 and the Rapture," 310).

things will he do when he is revealed? Is he alive today? When will he be revealed? These are all questions which theologians have pondered since the first century when Paul wrote about this coming figure. This next section will interact with the biblical data on the MOL and present the relevant evidence to help answer these questions.

Some commentators have suggested that this man might be Jewish.¹¹² Support for the idea is often based on the reference to Daniel 11:37, where it is said of this future king that he will "show no regard for the gods of his fathers." Some commentators believe that the plural term "gods" should be understood as "God," and thus mean that this future king will show no regard for "the God of his fathers, thus referring to the Jews."¹¹³ The exegetical findings from many commentators, however, suggest that this probably is not the case. Though this man may be Jewish, there is also good

¹¹²Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 323.

¹¹³This position is held by respectable commentators like Charles Feinberg, who says, "This expression 'the God of his fathers' is the usual one in the Old Testament for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of the patriarchs; the God of Israel" (Charles Lee Feinberg, A Commentary on Daniel [Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1981], 174). It can be noted however, that the plural term need not refer to the God of Israel. Numerous commentators prefer to understand this as a reference to the polytheistic gods of this man's ancestors. Showers says, "It is possible that Antichrist will be a Jew, but that cannot be concluded with certainty on the basis of this one statement" (Renald Showers, The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel [Bellmawr: Friends of Israel, 1982], 164).

evidence to suggest that he may be a Gentile. One notable point is the reference in Daniel 9:26 which talks about "the people of the prince who is to come." Virtually all dispensational theologians agree that "people" in this verse is a reference to the Roman army that destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70; therefore, so the reasoning goes, this prince (MOL) must himself be Gentile, too (out of a revived Roman empire).

The title "MOL" appears nowhere else in Scripture.¹¹⁴ This does not mean, however, that there are no biblical passages that make reference to this individual. Marshall says that "the phrase is a unique one, although the idea of a major evil figure opposed to God in the last days is well attested." Marshall correctly observes that certain references by John in both his epistles and Revelation are probably speaking about the same individual, but by the title "Antichrist."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴A textual variant exists which produces the choice of "MOL" or "man of sin." The evidence is broad on both sides, but the earliest and best evidence (manuscripts, versions, and patristic citations) supports the former.

¹¹⁵Marshall, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 189. Strangely enough, Marshall then goes on to deny the literal aspect that this man will take his seat in the Jerusalem temple. In his words, this is "part of a total understanding of biblical prophecy which rests on an over-literal interpretation of apocalyptic imagery" (191). On the other hand, one of the earliest extant references to this passage is from Irenaeus who said, "and again speaking of Antichrist, he says, 'who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.'" Irenaeus definitely believed in the literalness of Paul's eschatological teaching (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers,

There is also strong reason to believe that this man is one who was spoken of numerous times in the Book of Daniel (such as in 11:36ff.). It will become clear just how much background there is in Daniel concerning this man.

At this point, the first aspect to consider in the discussion is the character of this future figure based on the words of 2 Thessalonians 2:3ff.

The character of the man. As will be shown through the following discussion, one must reject the notion that Paul was merely referring to an abstract concept when he wrote about the MOL. Both the descriptions and the antithetical parallels with Jesus Christ strongly suggest that Paul was literally referring to a human being. Only time, however, will indicate who this man actually is. Peters is correct when he writes,

It would be useless to try to identify this eschatological being with any historical personage precisely because he belongs to the future. Apocalyptic writers [the writer rejects the popular conception of apocalyptic taken by Peters] use the past to announce the future. But while we can surmise the past event or person they have in mind (Antiochus Epiphanes), it is impossible to know who, in days to come, will reproduce what now belongs to history.¹¹⁶

30.4, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973], 420).

¹¹⁶A. Peters, "A Difficult Passage in St. Paul: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12," AFER 7 (July 1965): 202. Thomas also supports this conclusion when he writes, "Paul must be referring to a historical personage 'The man of

Indeed one cannot identify this wicked man with anyone from the past, but the day will come when the world will see him.

Commentators are in general agreement that the phrases MOL and son of destruction are Hebraistic ways of describing one's character.¹¹⁷ The former phrase refers most particularly to this man's intrinsic nature: he is thoroughly lawless! Plummer adds insight by saying, "Everywhere in the NT νομ_α, like lawlessness, means not mere absence of law, but violation of it, conscious and wilful disregard of it, and such disregard is sin."¹¹⁸

There is a good possibility that Paul's choice of terms was influenced by the strongly messianic Psalm 89. There in 89:22 (LXX, 88:23) there is reference to a "son of lawlessness." The context of Psalm 89 concerns the messianic son of David, and his certain triumph over all foes. Verse 23 says, "But I shall crush all his adversaries before him, and strike those who hate him." This terse commentary on the

lawlessness' will be a new historical figure whom Satan will energize to do his will in the world" (Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 322).

¹¹⁷Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 167. Wannamaker states that the designations are derived from a similar Semitic construct structure. He adds, "In both cases the nouns in the genitive indicate a particular quality of the individual referred to." On the MOL, he says, "The designation 'person of rebellion' describes this individual's blatant disregard for and opposition to the will of God" (Wannamaker, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 245).

¹¹⁸Plummer, Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, 47.

fate of the messianic foe is not dissimilar to that applied to the MOL in 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

The second phrase is one that more precisely describes this man's ultimate destiny, destruction! Plummer again provides helpful insight by pointing to the Hebraistic genitive construction as a way of description. He rightly makes mention of the NT parallel of this phrase in John 17:12, where Judas Iscariot is also called the son of destruction.¹¹⁹ Just as Judas was one who was destined to eternal damnation, so too this man is destined for eternal punishment.¹²⁰

Though some commentators have suggested that there is emphasis on this man's revealing,¹²¹ there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case; nothing in the word order of the Greek text is out of the ordinary. The point is this: the verse does not suggest that his revealing is to be identified with the climax of his lawless behavior. In

¹¹⁹Ibid., 48.

¹²⁰Hiebert understands that it "denotes loss of well being, not loss of being, extinction. As the very opposite of all that is implied in salvation, it points to an everlasting state of torment and death. It is a destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life" (Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 333).

¹²¹Milligan, Thessalonians, 98. The reasoning is that since ποκαλ_πτω is the leading term in this last clause, it is emphatic. However, Grammarians have pointed out that this is a standard word order in Koine Greek (Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, 417).

other words, 2:3 does not imply that his revealing is to be equated with the subsequent action of his seating of himself in the temple of God (2:4).¹²² To say that the revealing takes place when the MOL seats himself in the temple, fails to take note of the fact that the στε clause in the middle of verse 4 combines with an adverbial accusative of general reference to form a result clause.¹²³ The verse does not say that his revealing is equal to his desecration of the Jerusalem temple. Rather, his defilement of the Jewish holy place is a great, climactic result of his hatred for the Jews.

¹²²The practical effect of demanding that his revealing is equal to his seating in the temple is that the rapture, the apostasy, and the DOL could not occur or begin until the middle of Daniel's seventieth-week. As will be demonstrated, this is so because of the fact that imminence applies to both the rapture and the DOL, and that the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL occur at the same time.

¹²³Eadie, The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, 270; Robertson, Word Pictures, vol. IV, 50. Wannamaker adds the following, "In the Jewish-Christian perspective from which the tradition originated, the arrogance of the person of rebellion toward religion in general would culminate or result in his usurpation of the temple of God to declare his own divinity. . . . Naos probably refers to the inner sanctuary where the deity was thought to reside. . . . In trying to give his readers a temporally oriented framework for understanding the coming of the day of the lord, Paul appears to have intended that they think of a final act of hostility toward God by some powerful individual, which would precipitate the coming of Christ. The well known attempt in A.D. 40 by Gaius Caesar to have his image erected in the temple at Jerusalem may well have given renewed substance to the belief that the temple would be desecrated by a usurper whom God would destroy in ushering in the new age" (Wannamaker, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 246-47).

One can, however, take note of the antithetical parallel that exists between Christ and the MOL.¹²⁴ Jesus is revealed (1:7); the MOL is revealed (2:3, 6, 8). Jesus has a coming (1:9; 2:2, 8); the MOL has a coming (2:9). In the same way that Christ awaits a public revealing, so too does this man.

The emphasis that can properly be derived from this passage is that there will come a particular point in time when this future world ruler will become identifiable to the world.¹²⁵ As noted by Ryrie, it would seem that the most conspicuous event that could properly be equated with the revealing and identification of this man is when he establishes the seven-year covenant which begins Daniel's seventieth-week!¹²⁶ For those who have any degree of eschatological insight, this event would give the unmistakable evidence that he has been revealed. Furthermore, it is not necessary to hold that the world recognize him for who he truly is.

¹²⁴Milligan, Thessalonians, 98. Lightfoot notes, "One of the important features in this description is the parallel drawn between Christ and the adversary of Christ. Both alike are 'revealed,' and to both alike the term 'mystery' is applied" (Lightfoot, Epistles of St. Paul, 111).

¹²⁵Ryrie has noted, "But he will be revealed at least to discerning people when he makes a covenant with many of the Jewish people (Dan. 9:27), and this will signal the start of the tribulation period (Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians, 104).

¹²⁶Daniel 9:27 contains the reference that the future world ruler (the MOL) establishes the covenant that begins Daniel's seventieth-week.

All that is necessary is that this figure be made identifiable according to his biblical identification.

This man has not yet been revealed and no one will know who he is until he establishes the seven-year covenant. Likewise, the Thessalonians certainly did not know his exact identity. It can be noted, though, that both MOL and son of destruction carry an article in the Greek text. Whoever this future man will be, he was certainly well-known to the Thessalonians through the teaching of Paul.

Does Scripture reveal any more about who this man is? Yes, it does. More data on the subject will be presented when attention is given to background in the Book of Daniel.

The conduct of the man. Verse 4 of the NASB says that this man "opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." The conduct of the MOL can be summarized as willful opposition to the God of heaven, manifested through blasphemous self-exaltation.

The first two participles of verse 4 (ντικε_μενος and περαιρ_μενος) are linked together by the conjunction κα_, with both of the terms being governed by the single arti-

cle.¹²⁷ Best points out that in light of the "emphasis on activity rather than on being," it is best not to see the terms as substantives.¹²⁸ Both participles go together, rather, stressing the conduct of this man: "he opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship." Robertson believes that a direct middle is the proper understanding of this second term; that is, this man exalts himself.¹²⁹ Milligan points out that the term is found only in one other place in the NT, in 2 Corinthians 12:7, where Paul talked about his thorn in the flesh that kept him from exalting himself above measure.¹³⁰ Thomas adds an additional insight that the prepositional phrase π . . . σ_βασμα must be understood to modify both participles with a negative sense ("against," not "above").¹³¹

As pointed out above, the ultimate result of this man's rebellion against God is that he takes his seat in the

¹²⁷Milligan, Thessalonians, 99.

¹²⁸Best, Thessalonians, 285.

¹²⁹Robertson, Word Pictures, vol. IV, 50.

¹³⁰Milligan, Thessalonians, 99.

¹³¹Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 323. Plummer also sees both participles bound by the common article, but believes the prepositional phrase only modifies περαιρ_μενος. The resulting sense would be: "that he opposes every so called god or object of worship and he exalts himself against every so called god or object of worship." Such a rendering would do justice to the inherent meaning of the participles (Plummer, Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, 49).

temple of God, displaying himself as God.¹³² This climactic act of defiance was foretold by Daniel in several places (e.g., 9:27; 12:11), as well as also foretold by Christ in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:15). This, however, is the only place in Scripture where Paul made mention of these eschatological details.

It should go without saying that Paul's reference to the inner sanctuary (να_ν) must be referring to the holy of holies in the Jerusalem temple, especially in light the temple's existence when all these prior references were made. Such is not the case, though. Earlier reference was made to Marshall and his denial that a literal Jewish temple is intended. Bruce says, "The material temple in Jerusalem has much to be said in its favor," yet he proceeds to say that it is "meant in a metaphorical sense."¹³³

Paul says that this world leader is one who opposes everything to do with religion, including false gods of false worship. For this reason, Paul says in verse 4 that he opposes every "so-called" god. This man opposes everything religious, even objects of veneration or worship. The term for objects of worship, σ_βασμα, is found in only one

¹³²Morris notes that it is untenable that this man is claiming to be Christ. He is not a false Messiah (Morris, Thessalonians, 222).

¹³³Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 169.

other place in the NT, Acts 17:23. It is here that one sees the way Paul used the term while he was in Athens, observing the idolatrous shrines on Mars Hill, and how he made reference to their objects of worship (idols).

There is strong agreement among most conservative commentators that Paul's wording was drawn from the Greek text of Daniel 11:36, a section that is acknowledged by many to be a reference strictly to the MOL.¹³⁴ Thomas makes an important observation when he writes, "Historically, a foreshadowing of this blasphemous intrusion happened when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in Jerusalem just before the Maccabean revolt."¹³⁵ The implication is this: in the Book of Daniel, there are both direct prophecies of the MOL and indirect allusions through typology. The significance of these allusions will be examined more fully in chapters four and five.

Paul shows his impatience with the Thessalonians in verse 5 when he asks them to remember his prior personal

¹³⁴Ibid., 49. Ellicott states, "This characteristic of impious exaltation is in such striking parallelism with that ascribed by Daniel to 'the king that shall do according to his will' (Dan. 11:36), that we can scarcely doubt that the ancient interpreters were right in referring both to the same person, Antichrist. The former portion of the prophecy in Daniel is appy. correctly referred to Antiochus Epiphanes, but the concluding verses (ver. 36sq.) seem only applicable to him of whom Antiochus was merely a type and shadow . . ." (Ellicott, Thessalonians, 105).

¹³⁵Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 322.

teaching, while among them at Thessalonica. His use of the imperfect (λεγον) in 2:5 indicates that this subject was not merely glossed. It was something that received thorough and repeated instruction. The return of Christ and eschatological doctrine was a very important subject.

The manner of his revelation. In 2:9-10 Paul gives additional insight about the real character of this man's coming and activity. Paul says that his coming is "in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish." This man is not Satan himself, but he is one "whom Satan will energize to do his will."¹³⁶ He operates under the full sway and power of Satan.

Paul mentions the "activity" of Satan. The term Paul uses is εργειαν, and refers to the exercise of operative power. Its use is "reserved for supernatural activities."¹³⁷ Here the working power is that of Satan, but every other NT use of this term refers to the working of God.¹³⁸ This man is the world figure who most fully comes under the power of Satan to do his desire. Satan's influence shows

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid., 326.

¹³⁸Milligan, Thessalonians, 104.

itself by this man's blasphemous arrogance.

Satan's operative power in this man works itself out with all kinds false power, signs, and wonders. Both the terms π_σ (all) and $\psi\epsilon_\delta\upsilon\varsigma$ (lying, false) should be understood to modify all three of these nouns in verse 9. Morris states that the first of these terms, $\delta\upsilon\nu_\mu\epsilon\iota$ ("power"), denotes the supernatural force which actuates the miracles. The second, $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon_\omicron\iota\varsigma$ ("signs"), points to their character as directing attention to something beyond themselves. The third, $\tau_\rho\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ ("wonders"), reminds one that miracles are things which man cannot explain. He can only marvel at them. Morris also adds the observation,

All three of these words are used of the miracles of Christ. . . . They help us to see the counterfeit nature of the ministry of the man of lawlessness. . . . The thought is not that the miracles are counterfeit (cf. RSV, "pretended signs and wonders"), so that there is no real miracle at all."¹³⁹

They are genuine miracles, but produced by the father of lies for the purpose of deceiving men into perdition.

This final aspect about the manner of his coming is seen in 2:10-12. One can see the contrast that Paul has set forth between God's truth and Satan's lies.¹⁴⁰ On the one

¹³⁹Morris, Thessalonians, 231.

¹⁴⁰Wannamaker notes that Paul often makes a contrast between unrighteousness and truth, like in Rom. 1:18; 2:8; 3:5, 7; 1 Cor. 13:6 (Wannamaker, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 260).

hand, this man comes with all deception which finds its source in unrighteousness;¹⁴¹ on the other hand, those who perish in disbelief do so because they had not received the love of the truth (a love for the saving truths of the gospel). It is God's purpose that these people should be saved by believing the message of truth (_ις τ_ σωθ_ ναι α_ το_ - ς), but instead they make the willful choice to reject Christ, and consequently they perish.

By the time the DOL begins, these people will have already rejected the truth of the gospel; therefore, in light of this disbelief, God will give them over to embrace the supreme man of lies, the MOL. Paul describes this supernatural deluding influence from God as "the lie."¹⁴² The result is this: those who disbelieved by choosing to take pleasure in unrighteousness receive the condemning influence of God's seal on their disbelief. Their fate is eternal torment along with the one they received as their champion, the MOL.

The timing of his revelation. The final exegetical point to consider in 2 Thessalonians is when the apostasy will take place and consequently when the MOL will be re-

¹⁴¹Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 327.

¹⁴²Ibid., 328.

vealed. The words of verse 6, ε_ς_τ_ _ποκαλυφθ_ _ναι_ _υτ_ _ν_ _ν_τ_ _αυτο_ _καιρ_ , tell one that all of these events are within the plan of God who has sovereignly determined the exact time of this man's revealing.

Careful attention to the grammar of the text gives one the chronology for the sequence of all these events. This is not to say that dates can be set, for God has chosen not to reveal the date of these events.¹⁴³ As with all the doctrines of the Bible, the implication of that which God has revealed is that one is to "be alert and sober" (1 Thess. 5:6), letting eschatological truth drive him towards holy living.

For many commentators, verses 6 and 7 are enigmatic, making the identity of the restrainer something that is practically impossible to understand. The abundance of writing on these verses evidences of its difficulty. It must be admitted that the Thessalonians did have the benefit of Paul's personal teaching on the issue, while interpreters today do not. This, however, does not mean that a good interpretation cannot be derived through careful study.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³Cf. Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:7; 1 Thess. 5:2.

¹⁴⁴Because these two verses have been well explained by men like Thomas ("2 Thessalonians," 324-25), Hiebert (Thessalonians, 336-39), and others, extensive space will not be devoted to the refutation of the errant views. Exegetical evidence for the view that verses 2:6-7 are referring to the rapture will be presented over the next four pages.

In both verses 6 and 7 Paul, reminds the Thessalonians that the restrainer restraining at that time.¹⁴⁵ Likewise, it must also be noted that the restrainer must be restraining up to this very day as well, for the apostasy still has not taken place and the MOL still has not been revealed. What is this restrainer, then?

Numerous views have been proposed for the identity of the restrainer. Though many since the time of Tertullian have believed the restrainer to be the Roman empire (with the neuter participle of verse 6 being the empire and the masculine participle of verse 7 being the emperor), this view must be rejected, for the Roman empire has ceased to exist (at least in a united form which exercises dominion) and the MOL has not been revealed.

Another popular view has been that the restrainer is the preaching of the gospel by Paul. The argument has been made that the neuter participle in verse 6 refers to the activity, and the masculine participle in verse 7 refers to Paul. Paul, however, has long since gone to be with Christ and the MOL has still not been revealed.

Other views have included ideas such as the Jewish

¹⁴⁵In reference to the v_v of verse 6, Thomas notes the parallel grammar of John 4:18 which supports his view that v_v should be taken with $\tau\ \kappa\alpha\tau\ \chi\omicron\nu$ (Robert L. Thomas, ed., Exegetical Digest of the Epistle of II Thessalonians, The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA, 1975), 75-76.

state, Satan, or Gentile world government.¹⁴⁶ None of these views, however, do justice to the text.

A view which does satisfy the grammar of the context, and which harmonizes with Paul's entire eschatological message is that the restrainer is none other than the Holy Spirit of God, who indwells the body of Christ on earth. Thus, God is actively restraining lawlessness in the present age through His Spirit.¹⁴⁷ At least six good reasons can be presented for this view.¹⁴⁸

The first support for this position is that the Holy Spirit is seen in Scripture as having a restraining influence.¹⁴⁹ This ministry is carried out through the agency of the church in the present age. Removal of the church does not mean removal of the presence of the Spirit in an absolute sense, but of His special restraining ministry during this age.

The second support for this view is that Paul's message to the Thessalonians contained explicit mention of the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18; cf. 1 Cor. 15:50-57). It makes good contextual sense to believe that Paul's statement that

¹⁴⁶Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 324.

¹⁴⁷Walvoord, The Thessalonian Epistles, 124-26.

¹⁴⁸The writer has found over twenty reasons to support this view, but only seven will be given here.

¹⁴⁹Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians, 111.

the restrainer will come to be out of the midst ("until he is taken out of the way," NASB) was a reference to the rapture. Since Paul did teach the Thessalonians about the rapture, this meaning makes the most contextual sense.

The third support for this view is that the two different gender references for the participles of verses 6 and 7 are explained as follows: the neuter participle is used in verse 6 because spirit is grammatically a neuter term (τ_πνε_μα); the masculine participle is used in verse 7 because the Holy Spirit is a personal being. Thus the former reference has grammatical agreement, while the latter has natural agreement.¹⁵⁰ This understanding is in perfect accord with the rules of Greek grammar, and occurs frequently in Scripture, even with reference to the Holy Spirit.

The fourth support is that, as noted previously, Paul's teaching in both letters has linked all of these events (the rapture, the apostasy, the revealing of the MOL, the DOL) together in a way that precludes any sort of visible sign. In other words, imminence applies to all these events so that the whole period of judgement (DOL) comes upon the world like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2). The only way for imminence to apply to all these events is for the rapture to be simultaneous with, or immediately before, the

¹⁵⁰Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 324.

revealing of the MOL in verse 8. The τ_τε ("then") of verse 8 magnifies the fact that all these events are very closely bound together. Immediately upon the rapture, the apostasy occurs and the MOL is revealed, thus inaugurating the DOL.

The fifth support for this view is this: the events which come during the seven-year tribulation period are in fact within Daniel's seventieth-week. According to Daniel 9:24, these events pertain to Daniel's people. The whole period is intended to bring Israel to the forefront of God's workings. It is thus best to see the church's removal before these events begin.¹⁵¹

A sixth and final support for the Holy Spirit-view is the fact that Paul had told the Thessalonians repeatedly that they were to look forward to the coming of Christ, not the coming of the MOL. Paul emphasized four times that the church has not been appointed to see the wrath of God (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:5-7; 2:1). If the removal of the restrainer is understood as simultaneous with the rapture, then one can harmonize these passages. Otherwise, one is left wondering how Paul could have contradicted himself so badly in the Thessalonian epistles.

Summary of Chapter Findings

¹⁵¹Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians, 112.

In this chapter it has been observed that the church in Thessalonica was one of the churches that Paul planted on his second missionary journey in the late 40s. Paul's ministry in Thessalonica was cut short due to the extreme opposition from those Jews who did not believe Paul's message.

First Thessalonians was written from Corinth in A.D. 50 with the purpose, in part, of correcting eschatological misunderstandings in the new church. About six months later Paul had to write the church a second time. Again, the problem was eschatological confusion, only this time it was caused by deliberate false teaching about end-time events.

Second Thessalonians indicates that the doctrinal problem was due to a false teaching which said that the DOL had come upon the Thessalonians and that they had missed the pretribulational rapture that Paul told them about. They expected deliverance from the wrath of God, but now they were undergoing afflictions. Their emotional moorings had been broken loose and they were in a state of panic.

To correct their error, Paul urges them to remember the things that he taught them while he was with them. Unfortunately interpreters today do not know all the exact details, but diligent attention to the text can help one piece his teaching together.

Paul reminds the Thessalonians that there were two

distinct events which must occur in order for the DOL to be present. The first proof for the presence of the DOL is the apostasy. Paul does not explain what the apostasy is since he had already explained this matter in detail in person. The investigation revealed the following: (1) it is not the rapture; (2) it is not a reference to the church (or the professing church); (3) it must be readily identifiable so that it can legitimately be a proof sign; (4) it was well known and specific in nature; (5) the idea must concern a wilful and ethical rejection of one's former position or belief; (6) the OT and the intertestamental Jewish literature provided the most abundant documentation for the meaning of the term; (7) these same sources give significant reason to believe that the apostasy might be Jewish in nature.

Finally, 2 Thessalonians also indicated that in conjunction with the apostasy, there would be the revealing of a man whom the Bible calls the MOL. Chapter 2 makes great mention of this man's arrogant blasphemy against the God of heaven. It was shown that this man rejects everything that has to do with worship unless such worship is directed towards himself. It was shown that this satanically inspired individual was spoken of numerous times in the Book of Daniel. Concerning this man, it was also shown that the rapture must precede his revealing. Therefore, the sequence

of events is as follows: (1) the rapture, (2) apostasy/revealing of MOL (immediately after rapture), (3) his subsequent seating in the Jerusalem temple, and (4) his ultimate destruction at the manifestation of Christ's coming.

Second Thessalonians does not reveal everything one would like to know about these events. Interpretation would certainly be easier if one had more explicit details about some of the issues. However, as mentioned previously, the Book of Daniel does contain a great deal of teaching that is directly related to 2 Thessalonians. Before looking at this OT background, though, a chapter will first be devoted to an overview of Paul's use of the OT in the NT.

CHAPTER 3

NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Introduction

A long history of discussion surrounds the NT use of the OT. Ellis points out that such questions were being raised by students in the theological schools at Alexandria, even in the earliest centuries of the Christian church. Irenaeus, who lived quite a distance from Alexandria in the mid-second century, also gave attention to issues concerning the textual background of OT citations in the NT.¹⁵²

Central to the debate are some very significant hermeneutical questions which still continue to be of great interest up to this present day.

In this study, discussion will be given to the different ways that NT writers made use of the OT. In particular, this chapter will devote significant discussion to the nature of biblical typology. This will be done by presenting recent works from those who have studied the issue in

¹⁵²E. Earle Ellis, The Old Testament in Early Christianity (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 54.

significant detail. The findings of these scholars will be evaluated and compared for strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations will be made therefrom.

Progressive revelation

Within these evaluations, consideration will be given to the nature of Scripture itself. Considerable attention will be given to the nature of progressive revelation, that is, the way in which Scripture was given by God in incremental stages. As redemption history progressed through the ages, God gave greater and greater light about His own person, purposes, and plan of redemption. Sometimes this new revelation was building upon a truth that had been given previously through explicit declaration; sometimes the new light was an amplification of a previous allusion; and sometimes this revelation was totally new, not having been mentioned in any previous Scripture.

In light of progressive revelation, one should ask the question whether or not it was even considered unusual for Christ or the apostolic church to appeal to Scripture on a basis other than the literal, grammatical, historical method. Were the NT writers using the OT in a way that was suspect (either by modern standards or those of the first century)? Or, were they simply following the current exegetical practices of the day (practices which may not have demanded perfect accuracy)? Or, were they acting in perfect accord with the Spirit of God, who was directing their pen to write errorless, inspired Scripture?

Hermeneutical questions for today

What about the church today? Is it legitimate for the church to use the same exegetical methods that Christ and the apostles employed? What kind of hermeneutics should one employ in his interpretation of Scripture? Is it legitimate for one to find types in the OT which might not be discerned using a literal, grammatical, historical method of exegesis?

These are all crucial questions on which many today do not agree. The issues are also of particular importance to a paper like this. As the data is presented and brought to a conclusion, it is believed that the reader will see that though the issues demand diligent effort, the problems are not insurmountable. The first topic to be considered will be the number of OT citations in the NT.

Statistics on New Testament Uses of the Old Testament

One can find a wide variance of figures among those who document statistics in this area.¹⁵³ Part of the problem is

¹⁵³Ellis lists quotations at "some 250 times or, if allusions are included, over 2500 times." He notes that various factors make it difficult to classify with precision. Many passages are used more than one time, while some citations merge several OT passages into one citation. Ellis presents the following statistics as the approximate numbers for the majority of specific quotations: Synoptic Gospels, 46; John, 12-14; Acts, 23-24; Paul, 78-88; Hebrews, 28-30 (ibid., 53); Nicole's figures for direct quotations are 295, almost 20% higher than those Ellis lists. Nicole points out

that it is not necessarily easy to identify and classify OT citations. Sometimes a citation will be introduced by some kind of formula,¹⁵⁴ while at other times there is direct quotation without any sort of indicator.¹⁵⁵ Also, citations may involve numerous OT passages which are strung together in a chain, perhaps connected only with the word "and."¹⁵⁶

On the other hand an OT citation may be nothing more than a mere allusion which does not correspond exactly to the OT passage from which it is believed to come.¹⁵⁷ Such is often the case in the Book of Revelation. Thomas points out that though there are 278 allusions out of 404 verses, there

that if one includes allusions, the estimates vary widely: anywhere from 613 to 4105 (Roger Nicole, "The Old Testament in the New Testament," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 1, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979], 617).

¹⁵⁴Cf. Matt. 1:22: "Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying. . . ."

¹⁵⁵Cf. Matt. 27:46: "And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'"

¹⁵⁶Cf. 1 Pet. 2:7-8: "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (Peter links together references to Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14, respectively).

¹⁵⁷Clear but unspecified allusion can be seen in the way that John makes reference to Ps. 2:8-9; Is. 30:14; and Jer. 19:11 in Rev. 2:26-27: "To him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces."

is not one single direct quotation from the OT.¹⁵⁸

Regardless of the exact number, it is a fact that the NT writers made extensive use of the OT. These early missionaries "presented their message by proclamation, exhortation, and argument, using the Old Testament to authenticate their claims."¹⁵⁹

What were the ways in which the NT writers used the OT?

In answering this question this thesis will not interact greatly with the liberal opinions of those who reject the inspiration, inerrancy, or authority of the Scripture. Furthermore, redactional or midrashic views which contradict inerrancy doctrines are not consistent with evangelical convictions and are simply to be rejected as illegitimate.¹⁶⁰

Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament

A good starting place is Bock's article on NT use of the OT.¹⁶¹ Bock simplifies the analysis by placing the major

¹⁵⁸Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 1-7 (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 40. Ellis adds that neither are there any explicit OT citations in Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, 1-3 John, or Jude (Ellis, The Old Testament in Early Christianity, 53).

¹⁵⁹S. Marion Smith, "New Testament Writer's Use of the Old Testament," Encounter 26/2 (Spring 1965): 239.

¹⁶⁰David L. Turner, "Evangelicals, Redaction Criticism, and Inerrancy: The Debate Continues," Grace Theological Journal 5/1 (1984): 44.

¹⁶¹Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old

current views into four categories. He labels the views and those who hold them as follows: (1) the full human intent school (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.);¹⁶² (2) the divine intent/human words school (S. Lewis Johnson; J. I. Packer; Elliot E. Johnson);¹⁶³ (3) the historical progress of revelation and Jewish hermeneutical school (E. Earle Ellis; Richard Longenecker; Walter Dunnett);¹⁶⁴ (4) the canonical approach and the NT priority school (Bruce K. Waltke).¹⁶⁵

The full human intent school

The basic premise of view 1 is that "if hermeneutics is to have validity then all that is asserted in the Old Testament passage must have been a part of the human author's intended meaning" (emphasis Kaiser's).¹⁶⁶ Kaiser states that it is an absolute necessity that to establish a "single sense to any writing," especially Scripture. He adds, "to accept a manifold sense makes any science of hermeneutics impossible and opens wide the door for all kinds of arbi-

Testament in the New, part 1," Bibliotheca Sacra 142/567 (July-September 1985): 209-23; part two of Bock's article was published in the following October-December issue.

¹⁶²Ibid., 210.

¹⁶³Ibid., 212.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 216.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 219.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 210.

trary interpretations."¹⁶⁷ Based on this statement, Kaiser would seem to slam the door on any possible meaning beyond that which the OT prophet foresaw. Evangelicals can gladly agree with Kaiser's insistence that original context and authorial intent must be the starting place for exegesis, but one asks, "Is his stated position fully supportable from Scripture?" Also, does he in practice allow for the possibility that an OT text might go beyond a single meaning?

Kaiser presents what he sees as five major ways in which the NT writers used the OT. He calls these (1) the apologetic use (Acts 2/Ps. 16; Matt. 2/Hos. 11); (2) the prophetic use (Acts 2/Joel 2); (3) the typological use (1 Cor. 10/Ps. 40); (4) the theological use (Heb. 3/Amos 9); and (5) the practical use (1 Cor. 9/Deut. 25). Again, Kaiser's basic premise is that in each of these categories the OT writer had as part of his intent the later NT usage.

Authorial intent and understanding. A question that quickly arises is this, "What about 1 Peter 1:10-12?" Kaiser deals with that question early in his book and presents this as the conclusion: the OT authors did in fact understand the content of what they prophesied concerning the Messiah; however, they simply did not understand the

¹⁶⁷Walter C. Kaiser Jr., The Uses of the Old Testament in the New (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 25-26.

timing of when He would come and when these events would take place. In Kaiser's view, the prophets did "have an adequate understanding of the subject" even though it may not have been a "comprehensive control of all the particulars and parts that belong to that subject."¹⁶⁸ To lend support to his view, Kaiser appeals to the Book of Daniel.

Kaiser takes the reader to Daniel 12:6 where Daniel asks the question: "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"¹⁶⁹ Kaiser's purpose is to explain how it is that Daniel said in verse 8 that he "could not understand."

Kaiser states that the only thing Daniel did not understand was when these events would take place, but to support this conclusion he appeals to another verse (8:27) in a totally different context. Furthermore, he does not even tell the reader that he is doing so. He says that the reason Daniel was exhausted and sick (8:27) was because he did not under-

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 18-21. Kaiser is not alone in his view of 1:10-12. Robertson holds a similar view that the prophets understood that they were speaking about Messiah, but just did not know the timing (A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. VI [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1933], 85).

This position does not mean that the prophets understood everything except the time of Messiah's coming. Hiebert is right for pointing out that "They foresaw a Christ, but they could not foresee Jesus; they could give to their Christ no definite position in future history. The One whose coming they foresaw did not fit any familiar pattern" (D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter [Chicago: Moody, 1975], 75). In other words, it was not possible for the OT prophets to put together all the messianic prediction and reconcile a conquering Messiah with a suffering Messiah.

¹⁶⁹Kaiser, Old Testament in the New, 22-23.

stand when these messianic end-time predictions would be fulfilled. However, the very verse that he cites as proof for his position actually argues against his view, for in 8:27 Daniel goes on to say the following: "I was astounded and there was none to explain it."

Daniel did not understand his second vision (chapter 8) and nothing indicates that mere timing is the issue. This is why Gabriel comes in chapter 9; it is to give Daniel "understanding of the vision" (9:23). Kaiser tries with diligence to argue his point, but it is questionable whether Scripture can fully support his view. Though it may very well be possible that the prophets understood in some way they were predicting beyond the immediate future, it seems from this passage and various others that OT predictions were not always fully grasped by the authors.

Types. Bock observes that Kaiser's position, as stated, would mean that he "rejects *sensus plenior*, dual sense, double fulfillment, or double meaning." However, he also points out that Kaiser does have a place for typology, which he sees as having four elements: historical correspondence; escalation; divine intent; and prefiguration. For Kaiser, though, typology is "not prophetic nor does it deal with issues of meaning; rather it is merely applicational."¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰Kaiser, Old Testament in the New, 103-10.

Kaiser states numerous times that the position he holds is the same basic view of Willis J. Beecher, the so-called "concept of promise theology." That is,

God gave the prophets a vision of the future in which the recipient saw as intimate parts of one meaning the word for his own historical day with its needs and that word for the future. Both the literal historical sense and the fulfillment were conceived of as one piece. . . . More was involved in this vision than the word spoken prior to the event and the fulfilling of the event itself. There was the common plan of God in which both the word, the present historical realization, and the distant realization shared.¹⁷¹

These events often revolved around generic or corporate terms, such as "seed," and referred to historical antecedents as well as realities to come. Kaiser adds,

Every historical fulfillment of the promise was at once a fulfillment and a sample, earnest, or guarantee of whatever climactic event it likewise often pointed forward to by virtue of the wholeness and singularity of the meaning in that word.¹⁷²

It seems that although he is using different terms to describe his position, Kaiser is very close in practice to a *sensus plenior* meaning. He continues to hold his position, however, that human authorial intent is always present.

Another factor in Kaiser's argument is that the whole context from which the OT citation is taken must often be taken into consideration. In other words, if a NT citation only quoted one verse or a part of a verse, the force of

¹⁷¹Ibid., 29.

¹⁷²Ibid.

that citation must be found from the larger context of the OT passage.¹⁷³ Also, if the author used a term that could refer to both a plural referent (like Israel as "son") and an ultimate singular referent (like Jesus as "son"), then this term should alert the reader that a type is perhaps intended. For example, in Matthew's apologetical use of Hosea 11, the important considerations are (1) a corporate collective term like "son," and (2) Hosea's context of God's covenant love for His son (Israel in Hosea and Christ in Matthew).

Concerning this passage Kaiser believes that Hosea realized that he was writing about something more than just the immediate destiny of Israel. He says that Hosea did not write a prophecy, but that this is "biblical typology at its best, for it begins with a clear divine designation, is limited in its sphere of operation to the act of preservation and deliverance, and is circumscribed in its effects: the redemptive action of God in history."¹⁷⁴ Kaiser presents some excellent evidence in support of his explanation of a very difficult hermeneutical question.

Kaiser also believes that types should be discernable through a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation and contain the following elements: (1) the type must be

¹⁷³Ibid., 51.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 53.

historical, concerning some OT person, event, or institution; (2) there must be some discontinuity through escalation; (3) there must be some continuity through prefiguration; and (4) there must be a clear divine intent and not merely passing resemblance.¹⁷⁵ It is debatable whether or not one can demand that types are discernable through a literal, grammatical, historical exegesis of the OT text, but the rest of Kaiser's guidelines are good.

His closing comments on types includes the thought that one might look for clues such as the mention of terms like "new," the use of technical and theologically loaded terms, and the mention major biblical events or themes.¹⁷⁶

The cumulative nature of promise. In his section on prophetic uses of the OT, Kaiser makes mention of the cumulative nature of promise in special revelation, beginning with Eve, Shem, and the patriarchs, and continuing to Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Concerning these promises, Kaiser says, "It ever remained as God's single, cumulative promise." Also, he adds, almost every commentator agrees that this single plan often occurs with a phenomenon known as prophetic foreshortening. That is,

The perspective of the prophet in certain predictive

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 106.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 121.

passages often simultaneously included two or more events that were separated in time at their fulfillment, yet there often was no indication of a time lapse between these various fulfillments in the predictive words as they were given.¹⁷⁷

This certainly seems to be the case in passages like Isaiah 9:6, among others, and is a good observation.

His section on the theological use of the OT builds on these same ideas. He approves of the idea that the OT must be considered as theologically relevant to NT interpretation, though he does not believe that it is the basis for the interpretation of a NT text.¹⁷⁸ Elaborating on his repeated plea that one can look backwards into antecedent revelation for theology, but not forwards, he says,

The Old Testament has a valid and strong contribution to make to the ongoing theology found in the New Testament. . . . We can honestly point to a strong line of continuity between the testaments in themes, concepts, issues, and the divine program and beneficiaries of that everlasting plan.¹⁷⁹

In conclusion, one can make the following observation: whether or not one agrees with all the details of Kaiser's view, it must be admitted that he presents some very good arguments which explain the issue adequately. One can also take note of his closing words concerning the difficulties: "There is nothing approaching a consensus within the

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 63.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 145.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 151.

believing or scholarly communities either on the definition or the ways typology is to be used in biblical studies."¹⁸⁰ He also adds the following closing thought: "When exegesis will observe those characteristics [historical correspondence, escalation, prefiguration, divine intent], it will be clear that there are some large sections of biblical truth intended by God to be prophecies."¹⁸¹

The divine intent/human words school

A reading of S. Lewis Johnson's book reveals many shared perspectives between Kaiser and Johnson. For example, Johnson declares his agreement both with Kaiser and John Calvin, who have both said that when the NT made a citation from the OT, it must have "applied to their subject, perverted not the Scripture, and did not turn the Scripture into another meaning." In other words, says Johnson, "they must faithfully represent the meaning of the Old Testament text on the point the New Testament author is making."¹⁸² Furthermore, "the meaning the New Testament author finds in the Old Testament text must really be

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 231.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 232.

¹⁸²S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., The Old Testament in the New (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 11.

there."¹⁸³ However, in distinction from Kaiser, Johnson believes that the OT text may hold more than the original author saw, but never less, and never anything that is contradictory to the grammatical-historical meaning of the passage.

One sees additional shared perspectives when Johnson comments on the nature of progressive revelation and the cumulative effect of biblical theology. Commenting on Hebrews 1, he says that the NT writers looked at the OT from the perspective of "the completion of divine revelation, finding in the book clear prophecies of Him that were only seminal to the Old Testament saints." That is, as the messianic promise gained more and more light, it was only natural that the NT should bring out its fullness. What is the ultimate fulfillment of this promise? It is in the incarnation of Christ and the final dwelling of God with mankind.¹⁸⁴

The differences between Kaiser and Johnson come out more as Johnson discusses biblical typology. Johnson says, "It is clear from the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament that there may exist more than one sense in the same Scripture." He also says, "many texts have a meaning that goes beyond their normal and historical sense, valid

¹⁸³Ibid.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 92.

though that [the normal historical sense] surely is."¹⁸⁵

Johnson adds that the human author of the OT type did not generally intend that the type be predictive, though divine intent was certainly always present. Otherwise, as in the case of Matthew's use of the OT, if there were no divine intent, there could be no fulfillment.¹⁸⁶ In other words, in Johnson's view, the human author did not always have a comprehension of that which God was speaking through him. Authorial intent was always present, but at times that intent was only in the mind of God. Johnson sees himself in the same camp as Augustine by holding that the "New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old is made plain in the New."¹⁸⁷

Johnson urges that the NT provides a pattern for proper hermeneutics in the church today. He writes,

If the apostles are reliable teachers of biblical doctrine, then they are reliable instructors in the science of hermeneutics. And what better way is there to discover their hermeneutics than to investigate

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 49.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 56. Is it possible that there is good content in both Kaiser's and Johnson's arguments? Could it be that a mediating view is possible? If so, then some degree of human intent in the type was always sensed, but the fullness of the divine intent was not brought out until the Holy Spirit brought out that fuller meaning through progressive revelation. Such a view would satisfy Johnson's demand for the presence of all three elements of a type, namely, (1) historical reality; (2) correspondence; and (3) prediction with at least divine intent (ibid., 66).

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 21.

their use of the Old Testament Scriptures.¹⁸⁸

The question must be asked, though, "Are there any apostles living today?" "Do Christians today operate under the same guidance of the Holy Spirit when they read the NT as the apostles did when they wrote scripture?" The answer to both questions is "No." Surely this is the answer Johnson himself would give as well. Therefore, this writer suggests that because no one in the church today meets these qualifications, no one has a blank check for finding types or a *sensus plenior* meaning wherever his fancies.

Does this mean that types are wrong or must be restricted to a view which demands original authorial intent? Again, the answer this writer suggests to both questions is "No." To the former question one must note that there is great agreement that types do exist and are legitimate. To the latter, attention is directed to those passages where authorial intent simply does not seem to be present (like the examples from Daniel presented in Kaiser's section).

It is simply beyond reason to think, for example, that Moses saw Christ in Melchizedek when he wrote about him in Genesis 14.¹⁸⁹ Such a view violates both the grammar of the

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 23.

¹⁸⁹Bock notes that the terms that are used to protect the connection between divine intention and human author's intention are sensus plenior or references plenior. Bock states that the former description is preferred by Packer with the implication that Packer's limitation is "slightly

passage and the nature of progressive revelation, a factor which Kaiser himself insists must be observed. Though one cannot deny the possibility that the OT author always had an understanding of what he wrote in prophecy or typology, it appears that such simply is not the case in an absolute sense.

In summary, Johnson allows for a decreased emphasis on the original human author's intent and understanding. His perspective on types is that the apostles understood all these typological hermeneutical principles (through the Holy Spirit) and that this was how they used the OT. Johnson's opinion, then, is that the apostle's hermeneutical methodology not only was legitimate, but it also becomes the pattern that Christians should employ today in their exegesis of the text (though with great care).¹⁹⁰

The historical progress of revelation and
Jewish hermeneutical school

Bock names Ellis as one who espouses the view which Bock describes in this way:

The main characteristic of this school of thought is its utilization of historical factors in assessing the hermeneutics of the relationship of the two testaments. . . . Jewish roots of Christianity make it a-priori likely that the exegetical procedures of the New Testa-

more open-ended than Johnson's" (Bock, "Use of the Old Testament in the New," 215).

¹⁹⁰Johnson, The Old Testament in the New, 67.

ment would resemble to some extent those of then contemporary Judaism. . . . The New Testament writers got their perspective from Jewish exegetical techniques and from Jesus.¹⁹¹

Perhaps one of the most disturbing elements of this school of thought is that it tries to define Scripture according to the standards of non-canonical writings and equate the NT use of the OT with the practices of ordinary writers of the day. For example, one sees references to concepts like pesher,¹⁹² midrash,¹⁹³ Hillel's rules of interpretation,¹⁹⁴ or Qumran exegesis techniques as the basis for the NT writings.¹⁹⁵ This school of thought holds that all of these phenomena were considered as acceptable methods for the handling of literature in that day. Therefore, if the NT writers used these same techniques, it would have been acceptable as legitimate by both Gentiles and Jews.

The major weakness with this view, however, is that it

¹⁹¹Bock, "Use of the Old Testament in the New," 217.

¹⁹²Ellis explains pesher as interpretation in which the pesher is equivalent to something like "this is," or "this is that which" (Ellis, The Old Testament, 68-69).

¹⁹³Ellis delineates two kinds of midrash, implicit and explicit. He says that the former is an interpretive paraphrase and the latter consists of a quoted portion of Scripture combined with a commentary. He says that this technique "was an established practice in first century Judaism in the synagogue service as well as academic schools" (ibid., 66, 91-92).

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 130-32.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.

denies the necessity of single meaning, and seriously compromises the accuracy of the text. Those who hold this position minimize or ignore the importance of accuracy in the biblical text.

Compatibility of various positions. In spite of some of the glaring difficulties, and also the not so evident problems with this view, one must ask the question, "Is there any legitimacy to any of its claims?" For example, consider the following statement:

This view also emphasizes that when the New Testament writers read the Old Testament, they did so out of a developed theological picture both of messianic expectation and salvation history. Thus, the theology of the Old Testament and in some cases that theology's development in intertestamental Judaism affect these writers.¹⁹⁶

This statement seems like a fair proposition in itself and is consistent with the views of both Kaiser and Johnson. Furthermore, this statement surely seems consistent with the confessions of people like Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Zacharias (Luke 1:68-79), Simeon (Luke 2:29-32), and Anna (Luke 2:38).

A question one might ask is this, "Is it legitimate to hold a view like Kaiser's (demanding a literal grammatical hermeneutic, at least some degree of intent by the original author, and which builds on progressive antecedent revelation) in conjunction with Johnson's view that OT prophecies

¹⁹⁶Bock, "Use of the Old Testament in the New," 217.

do at times go beyond authorial understanding, and Ellis' view that the NT writers were shaped to some extent by their own culture, contemporary literary trends, and the cumulative theology of antecedent progressive revelation?" With the exception of explicit authorial intent by the human author (Kaiser), there is no apparent reason why one might not see compatible elements in each of these views.

Spirit-given sensus plenior or midrash?. As Bock points out, sensus plenior is often the phenomenon to which writers appeal in order to justify the manner in which the OT is handled when peshet and midrash are suggested. Ellis is not so quick to embrace this idea fully, though. He says that all in all, "it is doubtful that sensus plenior provides an acceptable hermeneutical tool to explain the New Testament's interpretation of Scripture."¹⁹⁷

Blaser's article on Paul's use of the OT suggests that there is both "a real affinity as well as a profound difference" between Paul's hermeneutics and those of contemporary rabbinical exegesis.¹⁹⁸ Blaser's closing words in-

¹⁹⁷Ellis, The Old Testament, 73.

¹⁹⁸Peter Blaser, "St. Paul's Use of the Old Testament," Theology Digest 11/1 (Winter 1954): 51. Blaser suggests the following similarities: (1) the same introductory formulas; (2) same modes of expression, e.g., indefiniteness, mosaics of citations; (3) groupings in which each phrase advances the thought another step; (4) distributive exegesis; (5) philological exegesis; (6) argument from silence. He also

clude the following comments:

It is true that kinship exists between Pauline exegesis and the rabbinical methods of interpretation; however, in his fundamental attitude toward the whole of Scripture, St. Paul is worlds apart from his former teachers. . . . And thus, one cannot speak of arbitrariness in Pauline exegesis, in spite of his rabbinical method.¹⁹⁹

Balentine also makes note of the significant differences between NT methodologies and those found in Qumran literature. He writes,

Qumran theology is dominated by a messianic hope, by a forward look toward the coming fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. Qumran exegesis reflects this eschatological outlook. The New Testament too has an eschatological perspective, but the New Testament perspective is not only eschatological but Christological. . . . Hence, whereas Qumran interpretation of the Old Testament was characterized by a forward look toward coming fulfillment, New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament was characterized by a backward look, seeing the culmination of the Old Testament in the advent of Christ.²⁰⁰

Balentine makes some other pertinent observations about first century Judaism. First, the OT was in fact used in

notes the following differences: (1) Paul places much greater emphasis on prophetic portions of Scripture like Isaiah and the Psalms versus the Law of Moses; (2) Paul took more liberties in making freer citations of the text to show its Christological force. Similar conclusions can be found in Samuel E. Balentine's, "The Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New Testament," Southwestern Journal of Theology 23/2 (Spring 1981): 50-51.

¹⁹⁹Blaser, "St. Paul's Use of the Old Testament," 52.

²⁰⁰Balentine, "The Interpretation of the Old Testament," 46. Balentine's point about the Christological emphasis and "backward look" of the NT can be appreciated, but it must not detract from the forward perspective of NT eschatology.

the first century. It was not simply disregarded because it came from an earlier period. Second, the OT was believed by the Jews to be the Word of God and applicable for their lives. Third, the Old Testament was interpreted. In cases where it could be applied directly, without modification or modernization, it was so applied. Fourth, no single method of hermeneutic emerges as primary above all others. That is, it is wrong to try and foist a peshet or midrash style on the NT on the basis that these were the methods of the day.²⁰¹

In summary of this school of thought, the writer rejects the idea that rabbinical methods, like midrash and peshet, were the basis for NT hermeneutics. This does not mean that the human personalities were not influenced by the literary trends and practices of that period. It is almost undeniable that such is the case, yet this need not cause concern. It must be remembered that God ordains ends, yet He also ordains the means to those ends. In the writing of Scripture, it was God's design that He use men coming out of, and influenced by, that particular culture.

The force of progressive revelation. Furthermore, it is helpful to bear in mind the point which was emphasized by both Kaiser and Ellis that progressive revelation had a

²⁰¹Ibid., 46-47.

tremendous impact on the theological understanding of first century Jews. Though there were many misunderstandings, Israel knew about God's unfolding plan of redemption and they knew that they were intimately bound up within that plan. Passages like Zechariah 6:12-13 and 12:10 indicate that cumulative revelation had come to the point where Israel "could" be adequately informed about some of the incredible realities that were about to be revealed in Christ in the NT era.²⁰² The fullness of OT revelation had prepared the nation for the coming of their King. This idea comes out when Scripture says that it was in the fullness of time that God sent forth His Son (Gal. 4:4).

Ellis rightly adds the note that the NT also contains mysteries which had not been revealed in OT times. He points to Paul as one who preached these mysteries (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:2, 5, 9; Col. 1:25). He says that these mysteries had been hidden from prior generations, but now (in the NT era) they were being made known through NT prophets, like Paul (Rom. 16:26) and the other NT prophets.²⁰³ Even at the close of the OT, revelation was still incomplete. There was still more to be said when Malachi recorded his words. The writer of Hebrews, however, alludes to the finality of NT revelation when he contrasts the various

²⁰²Ellis, The Old Testament, 114.

²⁰³Ibid., 4, 118.

ways God spoke in the past with the way that God has now spoken in a totally new manner, in His Son (Heb. 1:1-2).

In conclusion, God was actively working out His plan of redemption in the NT era, and a central feature of this plan was the giving of new inspired literature. God ordained these ends, yet he also ordained the means, Israelites from first century Judaism (Luke is probably the only NT author who was not Jewish). The evidence does not suggest that NT writers based their methods on any particular hermeneutic of the period, but that they were influenced by these factors in the way they wrote. Finally, because of the superintendence of the Holy Spirit, these men were able to bring forth the very words of God exactly the way God intended.

The canonical approach and the New Testament priority school

The fourth and last hermeneutical approach listed by Bock is what he calls the canonical approach and the NT priority school. Bock lists Bruce Waltke as one who holds to this method, and cites Waltke's own words for explanation of the position:

By the canonical process approach I mean the recognition that the text's intention became deeper and clearer as the parameters of the canon were expanded. Just as redemption itself has progressive history, so also older texts in the canon underwent a correlative progressive perception of meaning as they became part of a

growing canonical literature.²⁰⁴

Another important feature of Waltke's understanding can be seen in that he

asserts the unity between the Old Testament writer's ideal language and God's intention. This agreement of intention is possible because the human authors spoke in ideal language. . . . Progressive revelation made more clear the exact shape of the ideal, which was always pregnant in the vision.²⁰⁵

These statements seem compatible with traditional positions on inspiration, hermeneutics, and progressive revelation. Interestingly, Waltke resembles Kaiser when it is said that he too "rejects a *sensus plenior* that 'wins' new meanings from the text and sees New Testament writers as 'supernaturally' discovering the fuller sense."²⁰⁶ Given Waltke's total view, though, it is difficult to see why he would say this.

The problem that arises is that Waltke, in contradiction to Kaiser and Johnson, believes that it is legitimate to read later progressive revelation back into antecedent revelation for determining the interpretation of the earlier text. Not only does Waltke believe this is legitimate, but he believes that the entire OT must be read and interpreted

²⁰⁴Bruce K. Waltke, "A Canonical Approach to the Psalms," in Tradition and Testament, eds. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), p. 7.

²⁰⁵Bock, "Use of the Old Testament in the New," 219.

²⁰⁶Ibid.

in the light of the NT.

One of the immediate observations of this anachronistic approach is that OT promises made to Israel are seen as entirely fulfilled in the church.²⁰⁷ As Bock puts it, "Such a wholesale shift of referents to the exclusion of the original sense is actually a shift of meaning" (for the OT passage).²⁰⁸ Why would Waltke reject a *sensus plenior* idea for the NT when he is so willing to create fresh interpretations for the OT based on a later NT text?

Though Waltke does present some good principles on progressive revelation for NT interpretation (i.e., antecedent revelation helps the exegete form a biblical theology), the benefit of this is forfeited by his practice of reading progressive revelation into prior revelation. For this reason, Waltke's position as articulated, must be rejected.

Conclusion

²⁰⁷This is the hermeneutical method used by amillennial theologians. They read NT truth back into the OT. By this, they redefine all promises to national Israel as being fulfilled in the church. The result of this reasoning must be that God changed the meaning of Scripture and lied to Israel. It is not simply a matter that there was more in the promise than foreseen (like S. Lewis Johnson allows for), but something different and something less.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 220.

The preceding discussion indicates why the NT use of the OT, and typology in particular, have been such debated topics since the days of the early church. Even today one is hard pressed to find two theologians who can agree on every single detail. Sometimes these differences are due to legitimate conflicts in perspective. However, at other times the disagreements might be due to different uses of technical terms or different emphases of facts. Consider the following observations which were made about the authors who were cited in this chapter.

Valuable observations

The strongest agreement between all the theologians came in the area of progressive revelation. Every author believed that God's plan of salvation became more explicit and understandable as God continued to give greater and greater light about both Himself and His plan of redemption.

Along with this was the common belief that Israel's understanding of God's promise was fully informed through the cumulative nature of God's promise. In other words, a first century Jew knew (even if imperfectly) that the Word of God was filled with truth about salvation, and that this salvation was "from the Jews" (John 4:22).

Most of the authors believe that both prophecy and

typology are found in Scripture, though there is no firm consensus on the definition and explanation of the latter. The four elements that most agree must be present in a type are: (1) it must be grounded in historical circumstances as a person, event, or institution; (2) there must be some degree of discontinuity through escalation; (3) there must be some level of continuity in its prefiguration; (4) there must be at least divine intent in the type (Kaiser would also demand human intent and the ability to discern it by a literal, grammatical, historical exegesis).

Many of the authors would also point to the importance of theologically loaded technical terms. For example, when one finds terms or phrases in the OT that have come to have fixed theological connotations, these can be clues that eschatological themes may be present. These "collective" (Kaiser) or "ideal" (Waltke) terms may also give clues that an entire context has typological significance.

Another important observation is that when the NT uses the OT, it must never be in such a way that it contradicts the OT passage. Furthermore, though the NT use may bring out more than what the OT presented in its original context, it can never be less, nor totally different than what the original meaning was.

Questions to be answered

Several questions remain to be answered from the beginning of this study. First, were the NT speakers and writers outside the bounds of acceptable contemporary hermeneutics in the way they used the OT? Were they in some way violating literary standards by the way they cited the OT? It is quite apparent that the answer is "No." This is self-evident, for the greatest opponents of the early church (the Jews) never made it an issue. If the apostolic church had been using Scripture in an objectionable way, their opponents would have seized on this to totally discredit their testimony.

Second, were writings and interpretations of NT authors simply patterned after practices of first century Judaism? Did the apostles merely employ the same kinds of midrashic techniques that were popular among the rabbis?

The answer to this question is again "No." As noted earlier, though there are some similarities between the NT writer's methods and the rabbinic methods of the day, there is by no means close correlation. There are, in fact, many differences between the NT and other uninspired writings of that time. Furthermore, as was also noted earlier, it has been shown that there was no single literary or hermeneutical model uniformly employed in the first century. Though there were undoubtedly influences, it is a figment of the modern scholar's imagination that people followed a set

mold.

Third, and finally, can the church continue to use the same techniques used by the apostles and prophets of the NT?

This time the answer must be "Yes" and "No." Since the post-apostolic church does not operate under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit in the way the prophets did when they wrote Scripture, it does not have the right to copy their exact methods. However, the very fact that types are known to be present does give one the right to identify types and their fulfillment. The key to this process must be a careful observance of those principles discussed above.

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS TO THESSALONIAN COMMUNICATIONS

As noted in the previous chapter, the NT writers made extensive use of the OT in their writing of Scripture. It is equally true that they made extensive use of it when proclaiming the gospel on their missionary journeys. A brief survey of Acts 13 reveals such to be the case.

Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Missions

Appeal to the OT was Paul's customary method of proclamation. In Acts 13:5 one reads that when Paul and Barnabas reached Salamis, they "began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." A short time later in Psidian Antioch, one sees how Paul makes reference to a number of OT passages to demonstrate how salvation history and the promise of God find their fulfillment in Christ. In 13:17, Paul refers to passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy; in verse 18 he refers to passages in Numbers and Deuteronomy; in verse 19 he refers to passages in Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1

Kings, and Psalms; in verse 20 he refers to passages in Judges and 1 Samuel; in verse 21 he refers to passages in 1 Samuel; and in verse 22 he refers to passages in 1 Samuel and Psalms.

Not only on the first mission was the OT the basis for Paul's preaching, but also throughout his entire ministry. Paul used the OT on his second mission (Acts 17:2-3), his third mission,²⁰⁹ and even up to the last chapter of Acts, while imprisoned at Rome.²¹⁰ This was Paul's pattern.

In light of the fact that Paul made such extensive use of the OT, one needs to consider 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and ask the question, "What was the OT text behind Paul's eschatological message to the Thessalonians?"²¹¹ It is most reasonable to assume that Paul taught the Thessalonians out of the Word of God. Can one point to any particular section of the OT that might provide insight towards solving some of the doctrinal questions in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2?

Paul's Eschatological Message in Thessalonica

²⁰⁹In Ephesus Paul taught "about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8). Through Paul's ministry there "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (19:10). Paul did not shrink from declaring anything to the Ephesians "that was profitable" (20:20; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16 and Paul's link of Scripture with what is profitable).

²¹⁰Acts 28:23 says that he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the law of Moses and from the prophets.

²¹¹Thomas comments that the increased use of the OT in 2 Thessalonians over 1 Thessalonians is "easily explainable for Gentile Christians who quite soon after conversion became conversant with it (Robert L. Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 303.

In this section, the particular interest is on identifying details about the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL. "Is there any reason to believe that the some of the background for Paul's references in 2 Thessalonians might have been from the Book of Daniel?"

Regarding this question one finds insight in the words of LaRondelle:

In order to receive insight concerning the historical rise of the Antichrist and the nature of his religious apostasy, it is mandatory to view the forecasts of Christ and Paul against the background of Daniel's original prophecy of the anti-Messiah in its total historical perspective.²¹²

After discussing apparent allusions to Daniel 7:25; 8:10-13; and 11:36-37, LaRondelle adds,

As far as our hermeneutical method is concerned, Paul's undeniable allusion to Daniel 11:36 should lead us first of all to analyze the religious pattern of behavior of the "king of the north" in Daniel 11:31-45, as well as the enemy of God in Daniel 8:9-13.²¹³

²¹²Hans K. LaRondelle, "The Middle Ages Within the Scope of Apocalyptic Prophecy," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 32/3 (September 1989): 345. In another article, LaRondelle discusses a hermeneutic that sees multiple recurring events throughout church history that are continuous fulfillments of OT prophecy. He calls this a "progressive parallelism in which covenant history is outlined as an historical continuum from Babylon's rule until the establishment of the glorious kingdom of God" (Hans K. LaRondelle, "Paul's Prophetic Outline in 2 Thessalonians 2," Andrews University Seminary Studies 21/1 [Spring 1983]: 62). This view must be rejected.

²¹³Ibid., 65. Scott adds that one must look to events which preceded Paul's message and not followed. He says, "Paul's word's must be interpreted within the historical-intellectual-literary framework and context within which they

It would appear that LaRondelle has a valid point. That there are some definite allusions to Daniel in 2 Thessalonians 2 seems to be an inescapable fact. These allusions (direct verbal links and theologically conceptual links) will be examined later in this chapter, but for the moment, attention will be directed to those parts of Paul's message that are not clearly identifiable strictly on the basis of 2 Thessalonians 2.

The kingdom and the King

Paul preached a message that was grounded in the OT concept of the coming messianic King and a literal messianic kingdom for the nation of Israel. Bock says, "It seems reasonable that Paul preached the kingdom in the synagogues since summaries of his preaching in Acts indicate that it was his basic teaching topic."²¹⁴ What would the arrival of

were first written." That is, in light of the background, what was understood at that time? (J. Julius Scott, "Paul and Late Jewish Eschatology: A Case Study, I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and II Thessalonians 2:1-12," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 15/3 [Summer 1972]: 143). Others also make the same observation. Commenting on 1 Thessalonians and Paul's mention of "birth pangs" and Jesus' return "like a thief in the night," Longenecker says that such ideas were "in line with the Jewish doctrine of messianic travail in the last days" (Richard N. Longenecker, "The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology," New Testament Studies 31 [January 1985]: 91).

²¹⁴Darrell L. Bock, "Current Messianic Activity," Trinity Journal 15/1 (1994): 79. References to Paul preaching the kingdom of God are in Acts 19:8; 20:25; and 28:23, 31.

this messianic kingdom mean for the Gentiles? According to Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45; 7:13-14, 27, and others, it would mean that the nations of the world would be put into total subjection to Israel's greater Son of David, the messianic King. This is certainly a message that would not sit well with the Romans. But is there any evidence that this is what Paul taught the Thessalonians?" The Book of Acts indicates that there is such evidence.

The kingdom message in Acts. As noted in chapter 2, Paul was run out of Thessalonica by hostile Jews who rejected the apostolic message. Before this happened, though, an angry mob had come to the house of Jason, apparently a new convert, and demanded that he turn over Paul to the city officials (17:5-6). The Jews were complaining to the city authorities that the apostolic messengers had "upset the world" and had now come into Thessalonica acting "contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus" (17:7). From this, one can observe that Paul was teaching the Thessalonians about a coming messianic king, and that this teaching was in some way seen as a political or military threat to Caesar and the Roman empire.²¹⁵

²¹⁵Commenting on "the decrees of Caesar," Donfried states that this may not refer to a breach to the Roman law of treason since at this time the concept of treason was founded upon public law, not Caesarean decree (Karl P. Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence,"

Donfried also points out that there are elements in 1 Thessalonians that could have been seen as "frontal attacks" against the Roman empire. For example, he makes mention of the way that Paul spoke of God calling the Thessalonians "into His own kingdom and glory." Furthermore, Donfried also points to Paul's use of certain terms like *παρουσ_α*, *_π_νησις*, and *κ_ριος*, which might have been considered politically inflammatory because of the regal connotations resident in the terms.²¹⁶ Donfried may be right that these "politically loaded terms" could have been promoting strife, but it seems even more likely that teachings about the Danielic kingdom of God would have promoted this kind of uproar.

New Testament Studies 31 [1985]: 342-43). Donfried makes reference to the work of Judge who identified one particular decree by Tiberius in A.D. 16 which prohibited predictions by astrologers and magicians and other types of divination. Judge gives three reasons why the Thessalonian politarchs rather than the proconsul of Macedonia might have handled such a problem: (1) there was an extant oath of personal loyalty by the inhabitants of Paphlagonia to the Caesarean house; (2) the Cypriot oath of allegiance to Tiberius included pledges of reverence and obedience. Judge believes a formula of this kind could fall under the category of "decree"; (3) there has been an inscription found in Samos which "strongly suggests that local magistrates were responsible for administering the oath of loyalty as well as to receive complaints concerning violations for such an oath" (E. A. Judge, "The Decrees of Caesar at Thessalonica," The Reformed Theological Review 30 [1971]: 2). It must be noted that the Jews may or may not have really cared about an infraction of Roman law. Perhaps they simply used this as the convenient excuse to get to Paul.

²¹⁶Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica," 344.

The kingdom message in the Old Testament. A survey of the OT indicates that the terms "kingdom" and "kingdoms" were quite common in the OT. The former term is found a total 319 of times and the latter 56. Of these references, the majority come in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and have reference to Israel's monarchy. However, outside of those non-eschatological contexts, the Book of Daniel has more references to kings and kingdoms than any other book of the OT. The singular term "kingdom" is found 43 times, and the plural term is found four.²¹⁷ Without question, there is more in Daniel that talks about the last events of this age and the establishment of the messianic kingdom than any other book of the OT (this does not deny the aspect of God's universal kingdom as well).²¹⁸ Based on the evidence thus far, it is very reasonable that Paul had used Daniel to a

²¹⁷The uses which would have been particularly inflammatory are 2:44 (twice); 4:3; (twice); 4:34; 6:26; 7:14 (twice); 7:18 (twice); 7:22; 7:27 (twice). The background of progressive revelation for these passages would include politically inflammatory passages such as Numbers 24:17; Psalms 2, 22, 89, 110, and 132; Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 14:1-4.

²¹⁸Merrill notes, "Nowhere is the notion of divine kingship seen more clearly articulated than in Daniel. Here, if anywhere, the mighty purposes of God are announced and the means of their achievement spelled out in brilliant clarity" (Eugene H. Merrill, "Daniel as a Contribution to Kingdom Theology," in Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost, eds. Stanley Toussaint and Charles Dyer [Chicago: Moody, 1986], 212).

considerable degree with the Thessalonians.

The identity of the restrainer

One might ask, "Is there anything in Daniel that can help one identify certain undefined references in 2 Thessalonians, like the identity of the restrainer in 2:6-7?" This writer cannot recall any material that has suggested any connection in this regard.

Perhaps a good reason for this is the fact that the removal of the restrainer through the rapture of the church was a doctrine that was totally unrevealed in the OT. That is, it is a NT mystery. One does well to take note of Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 that his teaching on the rapture was "by the word of the Lord."²¹⁹ That is, the rapture was a doctrine that had not been revealed before God gave this new doctrine through Paul, a NT apostle and prophet.²²⁰ Therefore, since the rapture of the church is a NT mystery (1 Cor. 15:51), one will not find any clues in the OT to identify it. Such knowledge must come from the NT.

²¹⁹D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 & 2 Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 208-9; Robert L. Thomas, "1 Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 276-77.

²²⁰Ellis correctly identifies the NT prophets as the ones about whom Romans 16:26 speaks. It was the NT prophets who revealed mysteries which had never been known before (E. Earle Ellis, The Old Testament in Early Christianity [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 118-19).

The revealing of the man of lawlessness

Unlike the rapture, one can find background in Daniel to help identify the nature of the revealing of the MOL. As observed in chapter 2, the term that Paul used when referring to this man's "revealing" is the verb ποκαλ_πτω. It was noted that this term speaks about the uncovering or revealing of something that was previously hidden. The key point is that when this man comes on the scene, something will have taken place by which the world will be able to readily identify him. His public actions will be known.

Dispensationalists have properly recognized that Daniel makes numerous mention of the figure whom Paul refers to as the MOL.²²¹ In fact, both testaments have passages which discuss the chronological constraints of the MOL.

Chronological clues in the Old Testament and Revelation. Revelation 13:5-8 makes several references to the MOL. These verses describe the way he blasphemes God,

²²¹Showers sees the Antichrist in 7:8; 7:21-26; 9:27; 11:36-45 (Renald Showers, The Most High God [Bellmawr: Friends of Israel, 1982], 78, 84-88, 132, and 162-74, respectively). Walvoord links the man in Daniel 9:27 with Paul's MOL (John F. Walvoord, Prophecy Knowledge Handbook [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990], 257-58; 492). Merrill also sees numerous links in Daniel with the MOL in passages like 7:24-26 and 11:36 (Eugene H. Merrill, "A Theology of Ezekiel and Daniel," in A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament, ed. Roy B. Zuck [Chicago: Moody, 1991], 393-94).

oppresses the saints, and seeks worship for himself. Verse 7 bears an extremely close resemblance to Daniel 7:21, and 7:25 and tells how this man seeks to persecute God's saints. Verse 5 tells the length of time God permits him to exercise this unrestrained terror; it is for 42 months. This 42 months of finds compatibility with Daniel 7:25, which describes the period as "a time, times, and a half a time" (i.e., a year, two years, and a half a year).

Daniel 9:27 says that the MOL breaks the seven-year covenant in the middle of the seven years at the three and a half year mark (again, this is equal to the time delineations in both Revelation 13:5 and Daniel 7:25).

Daniel 12:7 indicates that after the MOL breaks the covenant at the midpoint of that seven year period, he persecutes God's people for "a time, times, and a half a time." Verses 11-12 of the same chapter indicate that this chronology does in fact concern a period of three and a half years.²²² This chronology finds perfect compatibility with passages in Revelation (11:2-3; 12:5, 14), which speak about the last half of this yet-future seven-year time period.

²²²Verses 11 and 12 add 30 and 75 days, respectively, to what would equal three and a half years on a prophetic calendar. These extra days come between the physical return of Christ and the establishment of the messianic kingdom. Defense of this position can be found by consulting Paul D. Feinberg's article "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," in Testaments and Tradition: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg, eds. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 215.

Chronological clues in Matthew. All these events referred to in both Daniel and Revelation also find compatibility with two other key NT texts. One of these passages is Matthew 24:15. Here in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus makes reference to one momentous event which initiates what he termed "a great tribulation such as not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21; it should be noted that this is virtually a direct quote from Daniel 12:1). Verse 15 says that this event occurs when one sees "the abomination of desolation [the MOL], which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place." However, the point which must be noted is this: according to 24:3-14, by the time this one great sign comes, there will have been at least seven signs, indicating that the return of Christ is very near. All those events in verses 3-14 will have already taken place during the first half of Daniel's seventieth-week.

Chronological clues in 2 Thessalonians. The last passage to take note of is 2 Thessalonians 2:4. This passage, like Matthew 24:15, does not provide any definite time frame, but one can take note of the observation that was made in chapter 2: when this verse says "so that he takes

his seat in the temple of God," it does so in a στε result clause. In other words, when the MOL goes into the temple, it happens as a climactic result to other actions which he has already been engaged in. That is not his revealing.

Chronological clues in Daniel 9:27. The observation to be made is that according to Daniel 9:27, this man would have already been publicly identifiable three-and-a-half years earlier when he was directly involved in the establishment of a seven-year covenant with the nation of Israel. Feinberg properly notes that this last week is separated from the prior sixty-nine and is a unit to itself.²²³ He also properly identifies this final seven-year period as yet future; and furthermore, he properly calls this last period of time "the week of the Antichrist."²²⁴ In other words,

²²³Ibid., 212.

²²⁴Ibid., 213. Feinberg adds that the rest of 9:27 "fits the activities of the Antichrist well." He says, "The Antichrist will make an agreement with his followers for seven years. . . . In the middle of this agreement the Antichrist will go back on his word and cause the entire temple worship to cease." He says the Hebrew text does not necessarily say that he makes the covenant, but that he in some way ratifies it. Commenting on the way that Scripture may allow for a parenthesis between the fulfillment of all of a certain prophecy's details, Pentecost notes that such is the case in Daniel 9:24-27. He also notes that the one who makes the covenant in 9:27 is the "prince who is to come" of 9:26, "the king of fierce countenance" of Daniel 8:23, the "wilful king" of 11:36, the "beast out of the sea" of Revelation 13:1-10, and the "man of sin" (the MOL) of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come [Grand

"What event will permit the world to identify this man, readily?" It is when he establishes a seven-year covenant involving the nation of Israel. This is when and how the MOL, the Antichrist, is revealed.

One might wonder why Israel would enter into such a covenant. Why would the Jews to enter into a covenant with a foreign political figure? Daniel 9:27 gives a good clue.

The verse states that the MOL makes a firm covenant with the many for one week (seven years). The benefit to the Jews is easily discerned by the contrast in the next clause: "but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offerings." The reason the Jews enter into this covenant is because they receive a promise that they can reinstitute temple sacrifices. It is possible that through this peace treaty (probably involving Arab neighbors in some way) Israel regains access to the temple mount and thus reinstitutes the Mosaic sacrificial system.

Another question is this: "Why would the Arabs give back the temple mount?" Without biblical data, one can only speculate that they receive some kind of significant benefit by entering into this covenant with the Jews. Given the extremely volatile issue of the Jewish occupation of the entire land, it is possible that the Jews will have to give up significant land rights in order to ratify this covenant.

Rapids: Zondervan, 1958], 247-50).

The data, however, cannot produce a dogmatic answer.

The apostasy

A comparison of Daniel and 2 Thessalonians demonstrates that there is a relationship between Daniel's future world ruler and Paul's MOL. Now here is the question that must be answered: "Does it not make sense that those two phenomena which are so closely related in 2 Thessalonians might also be closely related in their OT sources?" Is it not a reasonable assumption that Paul might have been drawing from the Book of Daniel for his doctrine on both the MOL and the apostasy? The evidence indicates that such may be the case.

Sin and the nation of Israel. The Book of Daniel has a great deal to say about the sin of corporate Israel. Though Israel's sin is not explicitly mentioned in 1:2, this verse informs one that "the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand [Nebuchadnezzar's] hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God." The Babylonian captivity itself was God's judgement on Judah for her rebellion against God (Jer. 25:9, 11-12; 27:7; 29:10). Merrill notes that apostasy among the Jews in the seventh century B.C. was the real cause of the captivity.²²⁵ He adds, though,

²²⁵Gilchrist holds that because of Israel's covenant unfaithfulness, "apostasy did serve as a catalyst for Assyrian world conquest," and also that Israel's destiny as a

More serious, however, was the wholesale apostasy of the nation in the last 23 years under Josiah's descendants. . . . What brought her to her knees, and to her destruction and exile as well, was her persistent violation of her covenant commitment to her God, a violation attested by all the contemporary prophets.²²⁶

The writer believes that Merrill has correctly equated covenant unfaithfulness with the cause for Israel's expulsion from the land of promise. Gilchrist writes the following in reference to the blessings and the cursings of Deuteronomy 27-30, Israel's status as God's covenant people, and their eminent status: "It seems, then, that the revealed will of YHWH for Israel as the head of the nations suggests that world domination by any other nation would take place only if Israel deliberately rebelled against her covenant Lord, denying YHWH as the true mediator and redeemer of the world."²²⁷

That is, as long as Israel, as a corporate covenant people, would seek YHWH as her Suzerain and covenant Lord, she would have the peace and blessings which come under that covenant. However, if Israel were to violate this covenant,

nation is best seen in the light of the covenant that God had entered into with Abraham and formally ratified with Moses (Paul R. Gilchrist, "Israel's Apostasy: Catalyst of Assyrian World Conquest," Israel's Apostasy and Restoration, ed. Avraham Gileadi [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988], 99). This is not what Paul referred to in 2 Thessalonians, but illustrates how God deals with Israel as a corporate people.

²²⁶Merrill, "Daniel as a Contribution to Kingdom Theology," 213-14.

²²⁷Gilchrist, "Israel's Apostasy," 100-101.

she would be subject to the curses of that same covenant, namely the scourging indignation of YHWH.

Daniel himself was cognizant of this connection, as is brought out so clearly in his confessional prayer in chapter 9. Merrill says, "Daniel was keenly aware that this was the judgement of God predicted by the prophets of old," and that this judgement was based on "the same covenant that brought Israel into existence as a nation."²²⁸ Daniel's prayer magnifies the fact that the exile was "God's just punishment for their covenant infidelity."²²⁹ His prayer also included the confession that "the curse has been poured out on us along with the oath which is written in the Law of Moses" (9:11).²³⁰ All of Israel's sin and YHWH's indignation against Israel is bound with the concept of the corporate personality of Israel.

²²⁸Merrill, "Daniel as a Contribution to Kingdom Theology," 217.

²²⁹Ibid., 218.

²³⁰It is beyond this paper to show the full relationship that exists between Daniel's prayer and the Mosaic Law. One can note that there are no less than eight Hebrew terms in Daniel 9 which depict Israel's covenant unfaithfulness: (1) 9:5: "sinned," נָסָה; (2) 9:5: "iniquity," חַטָּאת; (3) 9:5: "wickedly," רָעָה; (4) 9:5: "rebelled," מָרָד; (5) "turning aside," שָׁחָה; (6) 9:6: "not listened," שָׁמַע לֹא; (7) 9:7: "unfaithful deeds," חַטָּאת; (8) 9:11: "transgressed," עָוָה. The link between these terms and the Mosaic Law can be seen in Deuteronomy 4-11 and 26-30. YHWH desired Israel to be "His people, a treasured possession." If they were faithful, He would set them "high above all nations" (Deut. 26:18-19).

Israel's corporate personality. Concerning Israel's corporate personality, God's covenant relationship with Israel, the impact of corporate unfaithfulness, and how all these factors relate to yet future eschatological events, Kennedy rightly notes,

The Old Testament contains chiefly an eschatology of the nation. In this is revealed the organic connection of its eschatology with its theology. . . . His covenant is made with His people. . . . Hence, the fulfillment of the divine purpose, the realizing of the divine order, must be looked for on a national, rather than individual lines.²³¹

The promises God made to Israel were to a corporate people. This is also how they will find ultimate fulfillment.

Concerning God's promises and Israel's obligation to obey, corporate infidelity by Israel is the paradigm by which the apostasy (2 Thess. 2:3) shall also be recognizable. In the words of Gilchrist, "Breaking the covenant by going after other gods, that is, by substituting suzerains, would be tantamount to the most heinous kind of rebellion against the divine suzerain."²³²

Israel's rebellion against YHWH will come to the point where she enters into a covenant relationship with Satan's

²³¹H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1904), 38.

²³²Gilchrist, "Israel's Apostasy," 101. It was both idolatry and Israel's unwillingness to seek God for care that led to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

emissary, the MOL. It is not Christ, but Antichrist in whom the nation will choose to place confidence.

Daniel had much to say about the sin of His people, and how this sin impacted the nation. There may very well exist a correlation between apostasy in Israel's history and that spoken of by Paul in 2 Thessalonians. Furthermore, it may be that not only is there a historical precedent for the apostasy, but Daniel may actually have prophesied about this apostasy. Discussion will come in the following section where the Daniel will be examined more closely for interpretive clues for identifying the apostasy with more precision.

Analysis of the Structure of Daniel

One fact that sets Daniel apart from other books is that it is referred to more than any other OT book. Moreover, it contains more fulfilled prophecies than any other book in the Bible."²³³ Daniel has had a profound impact on NT writings. Secondly, Daniel is the only book in the Bible to have its major division made by the languages in which it was written.²³⁴ Though some suggest a major division between

²³³Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Daniel," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 7, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 3. On pages 10-12 Archer notes that though there are direct quotations of Daniel in the NT, most of the references are by allusion.

²³⁴Other books do contain some portions of Aramaic, but not to the extent of Daniel (ibid., 6).

chapters 6 and 7, this fails to account for the natural division based on the original languages.

The Aramaic/Hebrew outline

Commentators have noted that the language division for Daniel is as follows: verses 1:1 through 2:4a were originally written in Hebrew; 2:4b through 7:28 were written in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Babylonian empire; and 8:1 through 12:13 were written in Hebrew.²³⁵ Why is this?

Gentile and Jewish significance. The most common response to this question is that God gave chapters 2-7 in Aramaic and the rest in Hebrew because the former was "of primary interest to the Gentiles and to Daniel's day," and the other sections were of primary interest to the Jews.²³⁶

This is not a bad answer. However, the following objections can be raised: (1) chapters 2-7 do have great significance for Daniel's people (especially the visions of 2 and 7); and (2) chapters 8-12 deal directly with both the Jews and the Gentiles, too. The question of literary structure becomes even more interesting when one considers the chronology of all the events in Daniel. Note the dates

²³⁵Ibid., 40.

²³⁶John F. Walvoord, Daniel (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 48.

for each chapter: (1) 605 B.C.;²³⁷ (2) 604 B.C.;²³⁸ (3) 586 B.C.;²³⁹ (4) 582-72 B.C.;²⁴⁰ (5) 539 B.C.;²⁴¹ (6) 539-38 B.C.²⁴² (7) 553 B.C.;²⁴³ (8) 551 B.C.;²⁴⁴ (9) 538 B.C.;²⁴⁵ (10-12) 536 B.C.²⁴⁶

One can see that for some reason Daniel ordered his writings to move chapters 7 and 8 out of their chronological order so that they could be next to chapter 9; however, the events in those chapters actually took place some 12-14 years before chapters 5 and 6. Why was this so arranged?

Is the traditional answer about Daniel's structure sufficient in itself, or is there something else one should

²³⁷Leon Wood, A Commentary on Daniel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 28.

²³⁸Ibid., 49.

²³⁹Ibid., 78. This is an approximation. Nothing in the text indicates exactly when these events took place. The events took place sometime between chapters 2 and 4.

²⁴⁰Ibid., 99. Nothing specific is indicated, but certain clues indicate that these events took place in the latter phase of Nebuchadnezzar's 43 year rule.

²⁴¹Wood, Daniel, 130-31.

²⁴²Ibid., 153-54.

²⁴³Ibid., 179.

²⁴⁴Ibid., 206-07.

²⁴⁵Ibid., 232.

²⁴⁶Ibid., 264. Wood notes, "For the fourth time, Daniel began by giving the date of the revelation concerned. Clearly, he believed that the chronological relation of these instances . . . was significant."

observe? The writer suggests that there are two concepts brought out in the latter Hebrew section which are not emphasized in the Aramaic section, and that these two concepts help one identify the proper structure and interpretation of Daniel. For the moment, though, the reader is asked to take note of a contextual clue which may indicate why Daniel wanted chapter 8 right next to chapter 9.

The last verse of chapter 8 says that there "was none to explain" the vision to Daniel. Verses 9:21-23 alert the reader that Gabriel had come to give Daniel "insight and understanding" of the vision. Thus, the vision of chapter 8 is directly related to the eschatological prophecy of verses 9:24-27, especially 9:27.

Yes, there is some correlation between chapters 7 and 8 since they both present prophecies of a global scale, yet there are also discontinuities. For this reason, God gave the latter in the language of the Jews. The message had certain elements for them that was of no concern to the nations. The two concepts that come out in the Hebrew section are the rebellion of the Jews against God, and His indignation against the Jews because of their sin.

Rebellion and indignation. As noted earlier when discussing the prayer of chapter 9, Daniel knew that the reason Israel was under Gentile dominion was because of their

rebellion. However, in the Aramaic section, one finds that there are no negative connotations against Daniel's people.

On the other hand, in chapters 8-12, the themes of Israel's rebellion, and God's indignation on account of their rebellion recur a number of times. Notice the way Daniel 8-12 speaks to the issue of Israel's rebellion.

The first verse to take note of is 8:12. This passage concerns the persecutions of the Seleucid king, Antiochus Epiphanes IV (hereafter, Antiochus).²⁴⁷ Both Archer and the NASB properly note that it was "on account of transgression" that the host and the regular sacrifice were given over to Antiochus.²⁴⁸ That is, it was because of Israel's transgression (___; or "rebellion") that God permitted Antiochus to persecute the Jews. This understanding of verse 12 is

²⁴⁷Antiochus was the eighth ruler of the domain of Seleucus, reigning from 175 to 164 (a preferable date for his accession is 176. First Maccabees 1:10 indicates that Antiochus came into power in the 137th year of the kingdom of the Seleucids. Working from 312 [Alexander the Great died in 323. Over 11 years his kingdom was divided into four parcels], this takes one to 176). This king began as a man of little importance, hence the little horn metaphor of 8:9 (compare the same metaphorical language with the Aramaic cognates in 7:8, 24-26 in reference to the yet future MOL). However, he "grew exceedingly great. . . . Antiochus is sometimes called the Antichrist of the Old Testament; that is, the one who brought suffering to the Jews in his day, in the pattern of what the real Antichrist will do during the Great Tribulation. . . . From what Antiochus did . . . one may know the general pattern of what the Antichrist will do to them in the future" (ibid., 212).

²⁴⁸Archer, "Daniel," 100-1.

shared by many.²⁴⁹ Concerning ____, TWOT says,

The fundamental idea of the root is a breach of relationships, civil or religious, between two parties. . . . By analogy, but in a religious sense, Israel was accused of rebelling against her divine king and the established covenant between them (Is. 1:28; 48:8; Ezek. 2:3; Hos. 8:1). . . . Predominantly ____ is rebellion against God's law and covenant and thus the term is a collective which denotes the sum of misdeeds and a fractured relationship.²⁵⁰

This description is helpful for identifying the nature of Israel's sin, transgression, and covenant unfaithfulness. Of course, verses 12-13 were fulfilled over 2100 years ago in the second century B.C.

However, the same basic term is used again a few verses later in 8:23 as a substantival participial, but the idea is still the same. Commenting on 8:23, Wood states,

The word for transgressors is a participle. . . . The word for "have reached their full measure" is a Hiphil form of the verb ____, "to make full." The general thought may be paraphrased, "when sinful actions have reached a point where God cannot permit them to go further without bringing punishment" (cf. 1 Thess. 2:16). "These transgressors are not the heathen op-

²⁴⁹Charles Lee Feinberg, Daniel (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1981), 106. Feinberg says, "There were some Jewish apostates who made Antiochus's work easier for him by their transgressions against the Law of God. Impiety was prevalent in Israel in those days, and in a sense Antiochus's vile acts were a visitation of the Lord's judgement for their sins." This view is shared by Hersh Goldwurm, Daniel (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1979), 225. He notes that the sin (____) of the Jews "caused the downfall of the temple."

²⁵⁰G. Herbert Livingston, "____," in TWOT, vol. 2, eds. R. Laird Harris, et al. (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 741-42.

pressors, but the Jews themselves."²⁵¹

Wood says a secondary reference might be to Antiochus,²⁵² but that the primary reference "must be seen as being to the Antichrist, foreshadowed by Antiochus, in whom alone some of the following descriptions find complete fulfillment."²⁵³

One key point needs to be observed: this verse says that the king who is "insolent" and "skilled in intrigue" (the MOL) will not arise until "the transgressors have run their course." This verse indicates that transgression among the Jews will come to a point of fullness at some future point (cf. Paul's perception of their sin in 1 Thess. 2:16). This very well could be exactly what Paul told the Thessalonians, and Daniel 8:23ff. could be the Scripture from which he was teaching them. The DOL cannot begin until both of these events take place, yet the MOL is not revealed until Israel simultaneously reaches the climax of her rebellion against God.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹Wood, A Commentary on Daniel, 225.

²⁵²Ibid.

²⁵³Ibid., 226. Though 8:20-22 speak of events before Christ, 8:23-25 applies to the MOL and not Antiochus. Gaps appear elsewhere (2:40 from 41-45; 7:6 from 7:7bff.; 9:26 from 9:27; 11:35 from 11:36ff.). Merrill says, "Gabriel's word to Daniel that the vision concerns the 'time of the end' (8:17) is sufficient to indicate that Antiochus alone cannot be its fulfillment, for the language is eschatological. There yet remains a rebellious horn." (Merrill, "Daniel as a Contribution to Kingdom Theology," 223-24).

²⁵⁴Kennedy, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things,

This is the exact thought that Kennedy expressed almost a century ago. He says that Daniel's description of eschatology has "made a profound impression on the readers of prophecy . . . and supply a setting for some of the most obscure of St. Paul's eschatological forebodings."²⁵⁵

Concerning these events, Kennedy adds:

The portrayal of the MOL in 2 Thessalonians 2, whatever other elements it may contain, has certainly modelled many of its features on various passages in Daniel. Notable parallels to the passage will be found in Daniel 11:30 to end, 5:20, 23; 7:25; 8:23-25. This last reference is suggestive. In the LXX of Daniel 8:23-25 we have the picture of a king who shall arise "when their sins are fulfilled" (πληρουμ_ων τ'ν_μαρτι'ν α_τ'ν). The filling up of the tale of their sins is the signal for a terrible crisis. Here we come upon one of the most marked points of contact between St. Paul's expectation of the παρουσ_α and the OT. It is instructive for his whole point of view. At the time when the letters to the Thessalonians were written, the apostle appears to have been peculiarly impressed by the attitude of his own nation towards the Gospel. . . . Their methods were so shameful and their enmity so bitter, that Paul saw in their conduct a sort of concentration of the spirit of evil. In his view they were wholly ripe for judgement: the wrath of God had come upon them to the full (_φθασεν __ργ_ε_ς τ_τ_λος).²⁵⁶

The fascinating point to observe is the parallel that exists between Daniel 8:23 (πληρουμ_ων τ'ν_μαρτι'ν α_τ'ν) and 1 Thessalonians 2:16 (_ναπληρ'σαι α_τ'ν τ_ς_μαρτ_ας). Is it just

208.

²⁵⁵Ibid., 43.

²⁵⁶Ibid., 49-50.

coincidence, or was Paul anticipating that Christ's return was very near and that Israel's ultimate apostasy was on the verge of occurring ("wrath has come upon them to the uttermost," 1 Thess. 2:16)? In the words of Kennedy, this future ruler comes forth when the sins of the Jews "have reached their climax."²⁵⁷

There is one final reference to Israel's ___ to be noted, its usage in Daniel 9:24. Because of its prophetic significance, virtually all theologians agree that Daniel's seventy-week prophecy is "one of the most important chapters of the entire Bible."²⁵⁸ Interestingly, the first goal of the seventy weeks that is mentioned is "to finish the transgression" (articular ____).

This is but one of six goals which will be fully accomplished before the end of this age and the inception of the messianic kingdom. Consider the following:

First, all these events are explicitly said to pertain to Daniel's people (9:24); second, Jerusalem is also a central part of this prophecy (9:24); (3) though provision has been made for the fulfillment of all six conditions through the death of Christ, the application of the benefits awaits future fulfillment; (4) the NASB has followed a

²⁵⁷Ibid., 182.

²⁵⁸Feinberg, Daniel, 117; Walvoord, Daniel, 216.

textual variant which slightly alters the sense of translation. The Masoretic text has the term שָׁמַר, which means to "close," "shut," or "restrain," but the NASB has followed the term סָּוֵם, which means "to finish."²⁵⁹ The difference is not major, but it does alter the sense slightly.

In the NASB rendering, the transgression will be totally done away with once the kingdom comes. In the Masoretic reading, the idea is that transgression will be restrained, but not necessarily totally abolished.

In either case, the point should be observed that the transgression still exists up to the present day, and that it is a part of God's dealing with corporate Israel to eliminate the effects of the transgression. That is, God ultimately will purify the nation and bring Israel into a state of restoration under her covenant. The writer believes that the climax to this ongoing transgression occurs a few verses later where it says that Israel enters into a covenant with the MOL. Within the context of all that is found in Daniel, this appears to be very plausible.²⁶⁰

Just as "rebellion is a significant concept in the Hebrew section of Daniel, so, too, is the idea of the

²⁵⁹Wood, Daniel, 248.

²⁶⁰Ibid., 259. Wood notes that the "he" of 9:27 is the king of the restored Roman confederacy, with whom the Jews ("the many") enter into a covenant, thus beginning the last week of Daniel's seventy-week prophecy.

"indignation" of God against His people because of their transgression. The term that is used to express this idea is _____ (the articular form used in 8:19 is rendered by the NASB as "the indignation").

As noted earlier by Merrill, in both 8:17 and 8:19 Gabriel made chronological references that strongly suggest an eschatological context in 8:23-25. The important point is this: Gabriel told Daniel that his explanation had reference to "the final period of the indignation." In other words, in some way Daniel's second vision (chapter 8) actually included events that would take place at the end of the age, not merely events which concerned the kingdoms of Persia and Greece in the second century B.C. Gabriel also described this time as "the time of the end" (8:17), and "the appointed time of the end" (8:19). At the least, both of these phrases strongly suggest that the events point forward to eschatological events. Wood believes that this last detached seventieth-week certainly would fit well with the idea of a "latter portion" of the indignation.²⁶¹

Concerning ____, TWOT says, "The basic idea is experiencing or expressing intense anger. . . . It is regularly translated "indignation," referring more often to God than

²⁶¹Ibid.

to man.²⁶²

According to Isaiah 10:5, one expression of God's indignation was when he brought the fierce Assyrian armies upon Israel to bring judgment on the idolatrous nation.

Isaiah 26:20 speaks about the tribulation period at the end of the age when God will pour out his indignation on the inhabitants of the earth.

Daniel himself also makes another reference to this indignation, or wrath of God, in 11:36. Many commentators agree that 11:36-45 is a passage that speaks about the MOL and eschatological events.²⁶³ In this verse one finds the declaration that the MOL will continue his reign of terror right up to the point that the indignation is finished. The implication is that it is not until the end of the seven-year tribulation period, when God has fully spent his wrath, that he puts an end the MOL.

At the present time, there remains much transgression among the Jews, but God will work with the nation until He has purged out all the rebels who transgress against Him

²⁶²Leon J. Wood, "___," in TWOT, vol. 1, 247.

²⁶³Wood, Daniel, 304. Referring to 2 Thessalonians 2, Kennedy states, "The whole paragraph, Daniel 11:30-40, abounds in traits which are more or less combined in the apostle's description" (Kennedy, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things, 182). He adds that 11:35ff. finds a close connection with Zechariah 13:9, in that both concern end-time purification of Daniel's people (182-83). Cf. John Whitcomb, Daniel (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 153.

(Dan. 9:24; 11:35; Ezek. 20:38; Zech. 13:8).

Visions in Daniel

Another factor that suggests that verses 8:23-25 are eschatological, and that the MOL is the "king" of 8:23, is that the major visions of Daniel all lead up to the end of this present age. Nebuchadnezzar's vision in chapter 2 leads up to the end of this age. Daniel's first vision in chapter 7 leads up to the end of this age. Gabriel's explanation in chapter 9 of the seventy-week prophecy leads right up to the end of the age. Finally, Daniel's third vision in chapters 10-12 leads up to the end of the age.

All of this lends further weight to the view that the vision of chapter 8 also culminates at the end of this age.

In other words, when verses like 8:17, 19, 23, and 26 make references which seem to reach out into the end-times, it is because, in fact, they do.²⁶⁴

Furthermore, the prophecy of 9:24-27 was not a vision. Gabriel came to give Daniel understanding of the vision which he had seen some 13 years earlier, the one which he had not understood, and concerning which "there was none to

²⁶⁴Goldwurm states that though some see chapter 8 as referring only to time of Antiochus, it must include the time period before the ultimate redemption. He recognizes the connection between the vision of chapter 8 and the explanation in 9:24-27 (Goldwurm, Daniel, 227, 256).

explain it (8:27).²⁶⁵

Gabriel's seventy-week prophecy was an explanation of certain aspects of Daniel's vision in chapter 8. This grand prophecy which reaches out to the time when everlasting righteousness is brought in is in some degree related to that vision in chapter 8.

Given the reference to the MOL in 9:27 and the Jewish alliance with him,²⁶⁶ the writer suggests that one should understand verses 23-25 as applying directly to the MOL. Likewise, the reference to "When the transgressors have run their course" is a reference to the apostasy of the nation when they enter into a covenant with the MOL (9:27).

Allusions to Daniel in 2 Thessalonians

Some relationship between 2 Thessalonians and Daniel is acknowledged by many. This section will examine the ways in

²⁶⁵Daniel 8:26 uses the articular term _____ (dream), while 8:27 uses the articular term ἡ _____ (prophetic vision). In 9:23 Gabriel says that he came to give Daniel understanding of the ἡ _____. Verses 9:21-22 provide clues that one must look back to chapter 8 as the antecedent for the words that follow in verses 24-27. Verse 9:21 states that Gabriel is the "man" whom Daniel had seen in the vision (____) previously, and 9:22 states that he came to "give Daniel understanding" which he did not have before (8:27).

²⁶⁶Walvoord says that there will be a "future compact or covenant between a political ruler designated as 'the prince that shall come' in verse 26 with the representatives of the Jewish people. Such an alliance will obviously be an unholy relationship" (Walvoord, Daniel, 235).

which the apostasy or the MOL might be alluded to in Daniel, whether by direct verbal links or theological-concept links.

Since the LXX was the primary OT text for the early church, it will play an important role for showing the verbal links.

Self-exaltation of the man of lawlessness

As noted in chapter 2, Daniel does not use the terms ποστασ_α (apostasy) and νθρωπος_τ_ς_νομ_ας (MOL). However, verbal links do support the idea that Paul's MOL is the same figure as Daniel's prophesied world ruler.

Perhaps the strongest verbal link is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The English and Greek texts read as follows:

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, displaying himself as being God (NASB).

ντικε_μενος_κα_περαιρ_μενος_π_π_ντα_λεγ_μενον_θε_ν_σ_βασμα,_στε_α_τ_ν_ε_ς_τ_ν_να_ν_το_θεο_καθ_σαι_ποδεικ_ν_ντα_αυ_ν_τι_στιν_θε_ς.

The passage which bears strongest resemblance is found in Daniel 11:36. The English and Greek read as follows:

And he shall do according to his will, and the king shall exalt and magnify himself against every god, and shall speak great swelling words (LXX, English).

κα_ποι_σει_κατ_τ_θ_λημα_α_το_κα_βασιλε_ς_ψωθ_σεται_κα_μεγαλυνθ_σεται_π_π_ντα_θε_ν,_κα_λαλ_σει_π_ρογκα (LXX).²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷The terms ψωθ_σεται and μεγαλυνθ_σεται are used to translate the Hebrew terms and , respectively. Both

Both Daniel's prophesied king and Paul's MOL exalt themselves exceedingly. Both passages show that he will have no regard for anything to do with worship, whether it be of the true God or some other kind of non-Christian system.²⁶⁸ He exalts himself above all of them.

As noted earlier, many dispensationalists agree that a gap exists between 11:35-36, and that verses 11:36-45 reach out into the end times of Daniel's seventieth-week.²⁶⁹ The implication is that though verses 11:21-35 are historical in

Hebrew verbs are in the Hithpael stem and carry a reflexive idea. This king will "exalt himself" and "make himself great." The Greek terms and their Hebrew counterparts both carry the idea of high exaltation, whether in the physical or ethical sense. Though 2 Thess. uses a different Greek term for this man, there is enough similarity between the septuagintal terms and the NT περαιρ_μενος to say that there is a good verbal link, especially in light of the middle voice and the prepositional phrase that follows.

²⁶⁸Ellicott notes that Paul's only other use of the participle περαιρ_μενος is in 2 Cor. 12:7. He adds, "This characteristic of impious exaltation [the MOL in 2 Thess. 2:4] is in such striking parallelism with that ascribed by Daniel to 'the king that shall do according to his will' (11:36), that we can scarcely doubt that the ancient interpreters were right in referring both to the same person, Antichrist (C. J. Ellicott, A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians [London: John W. Parker and Son, 1858], 104-5).

²⁶⁹Walvoord, Daniel, 272; Showers, The Most High God, 162-63; Wood, A Commentary on Daniel, 304-6; Feinberg, Daniel, 173; Archer, "Daniel," 144-45. Archer believes the evidence is in favor of a strictly eschatological understanding. On 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and the necessity for a temple, Thomas writes, "Dependence of these words on Daniel 9:26, 27; 11:31, 36, 37; 12:11 (cf. Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14) demands such a reference" (Thomas, "2 Thessalonians"), 322.

Antiochus and contain typological elements, the verses which follow are eschatological and speak about the MOL alone.

Other passages show this same link. Speaking about this man's arrogant rebellion against God, Daniel 7:8 records the following words about the "little horn": he had "a mouth uttering great boasts" (κα_στ_μα_λαλο_ν_μεγ_λα) (LXX). This arrogance is also found in 7:20: that horn "which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts" (_ο_φθαλμο_κα_στ_μα_λαλο_ν_μεγ_λα) (LXX). Verse 8:25 adds the following: and he will "magnify himself in his heart" (κα_ν_καρδ_α_α_το_μεγαλυνθ_σεται) (LXX). A final reference which demonstrates this man's haughty rebellion against God is 11:37: "for he will magnify himself above them all" (_τι_π_π_ντας_μεγαλυνθ_σεται) (LXX). These character descriptions all match with Paul's MOL in 2 Thessalonians 2.

As evidenced by the similarities, both Daniel and Paul are in agreement that this future ruler will be an extremely arrogant man who actively opposes God Almighty.

Temple desecration by the man of lawlessness.

Paul's use of Daniel is also evident in the way he refers to this man seating himself in the temple of God. The English and Greek of 2 Thessalonians 2:4 read:

so that he takes his seat in the temple of God.

στε α τ ν ε ς τ ν να ν το θεο καθ σαι .

Most dispensational commentators agree that Paul's words are referring to the same event Christ referred to in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.²⁷⁰ Matthew reads as follows:

Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place. . . .

ταν ο ν δητε τ βδ λυγμα τ ς ρημ;σεως τ ηθ ν δι Δανι λ το προφ του στος ν τ π γ

The three passages which resemble those in Matthew, Mark, and 2 Thessalonians are Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. They read as follows in the English and Greek. Verse 9:27 reads:

and on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations (LXX English).

κα π τ ερ ν βδ λυγμα ρημ;σεων . . . (LXX).

11:31 reads as follows:

and make the abomination desolate (LXX English).

κα δ;σουσι βδ λυγμα φανισμ νον (LXX).

12:11 reads as follows:

when the abomination of desolation shall be set up. . . .
(LXX English).

κα δοθ σεται τ βδ λυγμα ρημ;σεως . . . (LXX).

Despite minor differences,²⁷¹ there is great similarity among

²⁷⁰E.g., Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 322; Ernest Best, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1972), 286.

²⁷¹Differences also exist in the Hebrew. The first use

the passages. Hiebert, commenting on 2 Thessalonians, says that this man is "proclaiming himself to be God."²⁷²

Based on both the OT and NT, this man's arrogance will lead him to commit an act which is both defiant and idolatrous. This satanically empowered man (2 Thess. 2:9) will defy God by entering into the rebuilt Jerusalem temple (or possibly a less elaborate tabernacle) and deify himself. In this one finds a very strong link between Daniel's prophecy and Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

Summary of Chapter Findings

This chapter demonstrated that Paul made extensive use of the OT in his ministry. It was shown that the eschatological message to the Thessalonians undoubtedly contained references to the Book of Daniel. As various passages have

of "abomination of desolation" is in 9:27 with the following features: (1) no article is used on ____; (2) both terms (____ and ____) are in the plural; (3) the second term, "desolation" (____), is a participle in the Pual stem. In 11:31 ____ is in the singular and does carry an article; however, the latter term is still a Pual plural participle. In 12:11, like 9:27, ____ carries no article; however, it is like 11:31 in that it is in the singular. Furthermore, the form of the term for desolation is different than the former passages. In 12:31 it is a Qal participle rather than a Pual participle. Archer still considers all three of these passages as direct quotations in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 (Archer, "Daniel," 10).

²⁷²D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 and 2 Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 334.

indicated, it is possible that Paul taught the Thessalonians about the MOL from passages which directly prophecy his coming (7:8, 20-21, 25; 8:23-25; 9:27; 11:36-45). It is also possible that Paul taught them that the MOL was foreshadowed by Antiochus. According to the discussion in chapter 3 of this thesis, Paul could have taught that Antiochus was a type of the coming MOL. Paul could have done this by teaching them from Daniel 8:9-14 or 11:21-35 about how Antiochus foreshadows the MOL.

It was shown that though some of Paul's teachings were NT mysteries (the rapture), other doctrines can be identified in Daniel (the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL).

It was also seen that Daniel contains some strong indictments against Israel for her covenant unfaithfulness, and that there are eschatological prophecies which predict that this covenant unfaithfulness will climax at the time of the revealing of the MOL.

It was shown that several verbal and theological links exist between Daniel and 2 Thessalonians. These links indicate that this man will defile the temple and demand that people worship him instead.

Finally, it was seen that certain passages in Daniel explicitly predict this event, but it was also seen that this same phenomenon occurred in the person of Antiochus.

In light of the typological elements observed in Antio-

chus, it is only proper that some attention be devoted to the events which surrounded his persecutions of the Jews to see what significance they hold for this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES IV AND INTERTESTAMENTAL JEWISH HISTORY FROM THE SECOND CENTURY B.C.

As noted in the last chapter, Daniel contains prophecies about Antiochus. It was seen that many commentators agree that Antiochus is referred to in Daniel 8:9-14 and 11:21-35. Just who was this man? Is there anything about this man that might point forward to the MOL and shed light on events of the tribulation period?

This chapter will focus on Antiochus' rise to power, his invasions of Egypt, his many dealings with the Jews, and the eschatological implications of all these events.

Rise to Power

As previously observed in 1 Maccabees, Antiochus came

to power in 176 B.C. Antiochus was the son of Antiochus III the Great and brother of Seleucus IV Philopater, who reigned from 187 to 176.²⁷³ One of the circumstances which led to his ascension was his release from Rome after some 14 years of imprisonment. Rome had demanded a hostage from Antiochus the Great after his massive defeat near Magnesia in 190. Rome's punishment included a heavy tribute and the Romans wanted some assurance that the Seleucids would comply.²⁷⁴ Antiochus served as that assurance.

²⁷³For defense of a 176 B.C. date see Schurer (Emil Schurer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, vol. 1 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890], 172).

²⁷⁴Israel Galili, "Antiochus," Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971), 74.

In 176 B.C. Seleucus IV arranged for Antiochus to be released by sending his own son Demetrius to Rome in a hostage exchange. Rome agreed, and Antiochus began his trip back to Greece. Before Antiochus reached home Seleucus was murdered by his treasury official, Heliodorus, who earlier had attempted to plunder the Jewish temple (Dan. 11:20).²⁷⁵ Antiochus used this to take control of the throne, leaving Demetrius, his nephew and rightful heir to throne, out of the picture.²⁷⁶ Daniel 11:21 foretold this event: "And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue."

Antiochus was a stranger. Polybius writes that many called him Epimanes ("madman") instead of Epiphanes ("manifest," as in "the manifest God"). Polybius adds,

Not only did he condescend to converse with common people, but even with the meanest of foreigners who visited Antioch. And whenever he heard that any of the younger men were at an entertainment, no matter where, he would come in with a pipe and other music so that most of the guests got up and ran off in astonishment. He would often, moreover, doff his royal robe and pick up a toga and so make the circuit of the market place. . . . He would often be seen wandering about in all parts of the city with one or two companions. He used to also . . . drink in the company of the meanest foreign visitors to Antioch. . . . In consequence, all

²⁷⁵Moss writes that Heliodorus came to Jerusalem after Onias III refused to hand over temple money to the Seleucid treasurer Simeon (Richard Moss, From Malachi to Matthew [London: Charles H. Kelly, 1899], 54-57).

²⁷⁶Schurer, History of the Jewish People, 173.

respectable men were entirely puzzled about him, some looking upon him as a plain simple man and others as a madman. His conduct too was very similar as regards the presents he made. To some people he used to give gazelle's knucklebones, to others dates, and to others money. . . . But in the sacrifices he furnished to cities and in honors he paid to the gods he far surpassed all his predecessors, as we can tell from the temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens and the statues around the altar at Delos.²⁷⁷

This mad-man was worthy of the title "Epimanes."

Jason's ascension to the high priesthood

Early in his rule, Antiochus summoned the high priest Onias III to Antioch, and while he was in Antioch Onias' own brother Jason stole the high priesthood by bribing Antiochus for the office (2 Macc. 4:7). Antiochus had low principles and was in need of money so he complied with the wishes of Jason.²⁷⁸ Many commentators believe that the fall of Onias is described in Daniel 11:22. There, Onias was spoken of as "the prince of the covenant," terminology which has some biblical precedent for such a priestly context.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷Polybius, The Histories of Polybius, 5.26.1.1-13, in The Loeb Classical Library, eds. T. E. Page et al., translated by W. R. Paton (London: Harvard University Press, 1960), 481-83.

²⁷⁸Pfeiffer describes many Greek practices introduced when Jason bought the high priesthood for 440 talents of silver (Robert H. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949], 11). Cf. Uriel Rappaport, "Jason," Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 9 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1974), 1291.

²⁷⁹Showers and Wood see this as Onias III (Renald Showers, The Most High God [Bellmawr, New Jersey: Friends of

From this time on (175 B.C.), Antiochus gave Jason permission to carry out a program of Hellenization. Jason then took steps to make Greek culture a part of Jewish life. Antiochus allowed him to establish in Jerusalem a Hellenist polis whose citizens were selected and registered by Jason himself. Jason even renamed the city Antiocha.²⁸⁰

Jason also established a Greek gymnasium in Jerusalem. This was especially revolting to the Jews since it was the Greek practice that men train in the nude. These actions eventually helped spark the Hasmonean revolt.²⁸¹

Jason extended a pompous reception for Antiochus when he passed through Jerusalem in 174.²⁸² He did not realize that by forming these ties with Antiochus, he was laying the foundation for a persecution that nearly destroyed the nation just a few years later.²⁸³

Israel, 1982], 158); Leon Wood, A Commentary on Daniel [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973], 295). Goldwurm writes, "The prince of the covenant" may refer to a covenant that Antiochus III made when Rome feared him, and sent Cornelius Lentulus to negotiate a covenant on behalf of Ptolemy IV. The result was the marriage of Cleopatra to Ptolemy V. Ptolemy VI Philometer was their child and could be the prince of the covenant (Hersh Goldwurm, Daniel [Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1979], 294, 298).

²⁸⁰Rappaport, "Jason," 1292.

²⁸¹Ibid.

²⁸²Ibid.

²⁸³Second Maccabees 4:22 says, "He was honorably received of Jason, and of the city, and was brought in with torch light, and with great shoutings; and so afterward went with

The reactions to Jason's deeds can be seen by examining a source that records the Jewish sentiments. 1 Maccabees 1:11-15 says the following:

In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us; for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. . . . Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them license to do after the ordinances of the heathen; whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen; and made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief.

This evidence indicates that to a pious Jew of the second-century, it was seen as gross covenant unfaithfulness for a Jew to form covenants with the heathen, especially when this involved an abandonment of Jewish covenantal traditions.

Menelaus' ascension to the high priesthood

Jason was only the beginning of Israel's problems. The law of sowing and reaping caught up with Jason, and in 171 he himself was outbid for the high priesthood by a man named Menelaus (cf. 2 Macc. 4:23-24).²⁸⁴ Menelaus did not even belong to the priestly tribe, but to Benjamin.²⁸⁵

This event is significant for several reasons. First,

his host unto Phenice."

²⁸⁴Rappaport, "Jason," 1292.

²⁸⁵Uriel Rappaport, "Menelaus," The Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 11 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971), 1351.

"The Zadokite priesthood disappeared when Antiochus gave the position of high priest to the highest bidder, Menelaus, a man not of the priestly family." This event ultimately helped lead to the revolt by the Hassaddims.²⁸⁶

Secondly, "Menelaus was one of the leaders of the Hellenists and one of the extremists among them."²⁸⁷ What Jason did in bringing in apostasy to the Jews, Menelaus took to an extreme. Second Maccabees 4:32 says that he plundered the temple of its gold. Also, verse 4:34 says that shortly thereafter, Menelaus had Onias put to death at Daphne because of his protests against his lawless activities.²⁸⁸

Antiochus' First Egyptian Invasion

About a year later, Antiochus got word that Ptolemy Philometer, acting under the counsel of his advisors Eulaeus and Lenaeus, was planning to recover Coele-Syria and avenge an earlier defeat at Panias. Antiochus moved fast and made his first military invasion into Egypt in early 170 (Dan. 11:25-26). According to Daniel 11:25, Antiochus soundly conquered Memphis, defeated Philometer (his nephew), and

²⁸⁶William Sloan, Between the Testaments (Patterson New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Company, 1964), 89.

²⁸⁷Rappaport, "Menelaus," 1351.

²⁸⁸Ibid.

took his nephew hostage.²⁸⁹

Before leaving Egypt Antiochus made an arrangement with his nephew that the two of them could combine forces against Philometer's brother, Ptolemy VII Euergetes. These events were foretold in Daniel 11:27. Neither Antiochus nor Philometer believed the other. They each spoke lies as they plotted the other's defeat.

About this time Menelaus began to show his true colors. In Late 170 Menelaus allowed Antiochus to violate the temple sanctuary. Antiochus made mockery of the Jews by saying that inside the temple he saw "the statue of a long bearded man, seated upon an ass, and holding a roll in his hand." These things he meant to be referring to Moses.²⁹⁰ Streame adds that with the help of Menelaus, Antiochus performed a three-day massacre of the Jews, and plundered all the valuables of the temple before returning back to Antioch.²⁹¹ Tribulation was becoming intense for the Jews, but the greatest of tribulation still lay ahead.

Antiochus' Second Egyptian Invasion

²⁸⁹Harold W. Hoehner, "Antiochus," The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia, vol 1, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 192.

²⁹⁰Moss, From Malachi to Matthew, 62.

²⁹¹A. W. Streame, The Age of the Maccabees (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898), 32.

Daniel 11:29 foretold how Antiochus would make his second military invasion of Egypt in 168. Antiochus learned that Philometer had broken their agreement and formed an alliance with his brother Euergetes. Antiochus felt betrayed and went forth with great anger.²⁹²

The appointed defeat

Daniel indicates that the timing and outcome of this expedition was fully in the plan of God. Just as God had an "appointed time" for Antiochus to return, God also planned that it would not "turn out the way it did before" (11:29). Polybius records the details of what transpired:

At the time when Antiochus approached Ptolemy . . . Caius Popilius Laenas, the Roman commander, on Antiochus' greeting him from a distance and then holding out his hand, handed to the king, as he had it be him, the copy of the senate consultum, and told him to read it. . . . But when the king, after reading it, said he would like to communicate with his friends about this intelligence, Popilius acted in a manner which was thought to be offensive and exceedingly arrogant. He was carrying a stick cut from a vine, and with this he drew a circle round Antiochus and told him he must remain inside this circle until he gave his decision about the contents of the letter.²⁹³

Antiochus knew that Rome was not to be defied, so he humbly accepted the demand that he retreat. These events were foretold in Daniel 11:30.

²⁹²Showers, The Most High God, 159.

²⁹³Polybius, The Histories of Polybius, 6.29.27.1-6, 89-91.

The wrath of a humiliated king

Verse 30 also says that after being humiliated by the Romans, Antiochus headed back for Antioch and decided to vent his rage on the people he hated the most, the Jews. Archer notes that part of Antiochus' anger was due to the fact that Jason, having heard a rumor that Antiochus was dead, returned to Jerusalem with a force of about 1,000 men, attacking the city, and driving Menelaus into confinement in the Citadel.²⁹⁴ Jason even slaughtered multitudes of his own countrymen (2 Macc. 5:5-6). However, when Antiochus made his return, Jason feared for his life, was driven out, and fled.²⁹⁵ Second Maccabees 5:8 says that Jason was hated as "a forsaker of the laws" (ὁ ἄρνησας τὰ νόμους, i.e., an apostate).

Second Maccabees 5:11-6:2 goes on to record the atrocities that followed by telling how Antiochus

took the city by force of arms, and commanded his men of war not to spare such as they met, and to slay such as went up on the houses. Thus, there was killing of young and old. . . . There were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand. . . . Yet he was not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world, Menelaus, that traitor to the laws, and to his own country, being

²⁹⁴Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Daniel," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 7, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 138.

²⁹⁵Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times, 12.

his guide; and taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated. . . . When Antiochus had carried out of the temple a thousand and eight hundred talents, he departed in all haste unto Antioch . . . and he left . . . Menelaus, who worse than all the rest bare an heavy hand over against the citizens, having a malicious mind against his own countrymen the Jews. He also sent that detestable ringleader Apollonius with an army of two and twenty thousand, commanding them to slay all those that were in their best age. . . . Not long after this the king sent an old man of Athens to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers, and not to live after the laws of God; and to pollute also the temple in Jerusalem, and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius.

The following verses tell how Antiochus severely enforced his program of Hellenization. These events came some time before the sacrifice of a pig on the altar (v. 47), the setting up of the altar of Zeus on the fifteenth day of Casleu, 168 (v. 54), and the sacrifice unto Zeus in the temple on the twenty-fifth of that same month (v. 59).²⁹⁶

Daniel 11:30 says that there were people who complied with Antiochus' desire that they "forsake the holy covenant." Pfeiffer comments on the various Jewish responses,

Some, either through inclination or through fear, forsook the religion of their fathers and complied with the royal edict (1 Macc. 1:43, 52). The Hassaddim, or Pious (1 Macc. 7:13; 2 Macc. 14:6), on the contrary offered passive resistance to the new law. . . . A

²⁹⁶2300 sacrifices (1150 days) were missed from the time they stopped until the temple was rededicated (Dan. 8:12-14). However, from the time the altar was defiled by a sacrifice to the image of Zeus until rededication on the twenty-fifth of Casleu 165 B.C., there was a period of exactly three years (cf. 1 Macc. 4:52). This chronology fits the historical data and means that sacrifices were forcefully stopped on October 15, 168 B.C., exactly 1150 days before December 15, 165 B.C.

third group, chiefly rural, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus decided to defy openly the royal edict and to fight for their faith.²⁹⁷

In Daniel 11:28-35 one finds multiple references to Israel's covenant with YHWH ("the holy covenant"). This covenant is mentioned four times in four verses. In the middle of these references that speak of a Jewish apostasy is a verse that foreshadows the way MOL will desecrate the temple (11:31; cf. Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4). This is not an explicit prophecy of a future apostasy, but it does lend weight to that passage which does predict it (8:23).

Summary of Events and Eschatological Implications

Under the persecutions of Antiochus, there occurred an apostasy in which many of the Jews, beginning with the leaders, aligned themselves with the Gentiles, and rejected Judaism. In light of the way that Antiochus foreshadows the MOL, it is possible that this foreshadows another Jewish apostasy in the last days, that in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times, 13-14.

²⁹⁸The Greek term in 11:30 is καταλιπ_ντας, which semantically is similar to φ_στημι. Abbott-Smith defines it as, "to leave," "to leave behind," "to forsake," "to abandon" (G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986], 286). In regard to 2 Thess. 2, Thomas writes, "An illustration of this kind of apostasy was that of faithless Jews just before the Maccabean uprising" (Robert L. Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11, gen. ed. Frank E.

What happened 2,200 years ago between Antiochus and the Jews may be a picture of what will happen at the end of this age. Perhaps that is why Scripture has given such great attention to those events.

NOT ADDED INTO THESIS

In summary of this discussion, six reasons will be given why Antiochus should be understood as a type foreshadowing the MOL. First, Antiochus came to power very quickly after being a virtual nobody ("little-horn"). Likewise, the MOL will come to power out of seeming insignificance (Dan. 8:9, Antiochus; 7:8, MOL).

Second, it was seen that this man was quite religious (he offered sacrifices and offerings to his gods). In this way, Antiochus is dissimilar to the MOL, for the MOL thinks nothing of religious worship (Dan. 11:36-37).

Third, it has been observed that both men are wicked, arrogant, blasphemous, and self-seeking to an incredible degree. They are both fierce men.

Fourth, it was observed that there was a growing state of godlessness among the nation of Israel, and that this godlessness came to an identifiable climax when the Jews entered into an alliance with a Gentile world ruler. This,

Gaebelein [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978], 321).

too, will be repeated in the future when unfaithful Jewish leaders reject their Abrahamic and Mosaic covenantal status and apostatize by forming a covenant with a Gentile ruler.

Fifth, it has been seen that though the time periods do not find exact correspondence, there is close similarity between the chronologies of Antiochus and the MOL. Both men have covenantal relationships with the Jews for a period of roughly seven years (171 B.C. to 165 B.C. is the period from Menelaus to the temple rededication; the MOL has an exact period of seven years). Furthermore, both men enforce a policy which results in sacrifices being stopped for roughly three and a half years (168 B.C. to 165 B.C. for Antiochus; exactly three and a half years for the MOL).

Sixth, all the elements for biblical typology are present in Antiochus: (1) historical events concerning a person, place, or institution; (2) continuity between the historical event and the antitype; (3) discontinuity as seen in escalation; (4) biblical authority for divine intent is present in the NT in that the actions of Antiochus are repeated almost identically by the MOL.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF EXEGETICAL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this thesis it was noted that there is considerable disagreement among commentators over the meaning of the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL. The purpose of this thesis has been to examine the plausibility of the existing views and to suggest a view which satisfies all the relevant data.

It was noted that a false teacher in Thessalonica had taught the Thessalonians that they were in the DOL (2:2). Through a forged letter this false teacher taught the Thessalonians that the afflictions they were experiencing were because the DOL had begun, thus denying the pretribulational rapture which Paul had taught them earlier in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

To calm their fears Paul reminded them of two phenomena which would serve as proof that the DOL was not yet present, the apostasy and the revealing of the MOL. Paul's teaching was that the absence of these two phenomena was proof that

the DOL was not yet present. One cannot be sure why Paul simply did not remind the Thessalonians that the rapture must precede the DOL. For whatever reason, Paul chose to remind the Thessalonians of these two phenomena which must occur before the DOL could begin. Thus, according to Paul's argument, the absence of these two signs was proof that the DOL was not yet present.

On the other hand, logic demands that at the moment these phenomena do occur, the DOL will begin.²⁹⁹ Otherwise, these two phenomena could not serve as legitimate proofs for the presence of the DOL. In other words, assuming for argument's sake it were possible for the DOL to begin without both of these signs, then they could not serve as the concrete proof that Paul apparently had intended.

The analysis of ποστᾶσ_α showed that in the NT, the term itself is used only here and Acts 21:21, and that nowhere else in the NT is there specific teaching on this event. The analysis of prevailing views indicated that popular explanations of the ποστᾶσ_α all have difficulties

²⁹⁹The reader is reminded that Paul's use of an intensive perfect in verse 2:2 carries a present tense meaning. This present tense meaning is carried over into the apodosis of 2:3, with the resulting sense being this: "the DOL is not present." A future idea like "the DOL will not come" should not be employed. The present tense meaning creates the sense that as soon as the two events of the protasis occur, the DOL will be present, thus preserving the concept that the DOL will come upon the world like a thief in the night. That is, that period of judgement will catch the world by surprise.

which render them as unacceptable solutions.

It was observed that most dispensational commentators hold to one of two views. The first is that the apostasy is the rapture itself. Though one may present some contextual evidence for this view, the lexical evidence overrides any circumstantial contextual evidence. The noun ποστασ_α was not used in a spatial sense in the Koine period.

The second popular dispensational view is that the apostasy is a phenomenon which takes place within professing Christendom. Those who hold this view believe that sometime after the rapture, the remaining professing Christians will fall away from their former profession, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

However, it was pointed out that this view will not stand up to the evidence. First, those who hold this view wrongly appeal to later revelation in support of their position. Furthermore, the passages that are appealed to do not even teach that such a mass, identifiable apostasy will take place.

Secondly, Paul's letters to the Thessalonians did not suggest any kind of mass falling away. Rather, they suggest that the church will continue to prosper.

Thirdly, this view fails to meet the chronological demands of the text. The apostasy must take place simultaneously with the revealing of the MOL. Otherwise, if one of

these phenomena preceded the other, it would be possible for one to know that the DOL would be coming soon. This would contradict Paul's teaching in 1 Thessalonians that the DOL comes suddenly and unexpectedly (5:2). Both phenomena together were given as proof for the presence of the DOL. Furthermore, there can be no chronological gap between the rapture and these two events. All three, the rapture, the apostasy, and the revealing of the MOL must be either simultaneous or virtually simultaneous. The professing church view fails for these reasons and more.

The lexical study of ἡ ἀποστασία pointed to a meaning which is religious in nature. Apostasy concerns one's rejection of a former profession, or one's abandonment of his relationship with God. Research in the OT, intertestamental literature, and NT indicated that this term was used quite extensively with reference to covenantal unfaithfulness among the Jews. It is the writer's conviction that 2 Thessalonians 2 allows and supports this concept. That is, the apostasy is Jewish in nature.

As noted in earlier chapters, a foreshadowing of the future Jewish apostasy occurred under the persecutions of Antiochus. Moreover, it was also noted that Daniel contains explicit prophecies which foretell another Jewish apostasy at the end of this age, one which comes at the beginning of Daniel's seventieth-week. As noted earlier, a number of

respected commentators agree that Daniel contains such direct prophecies. This apostasy will occur when the nation of Israel enters into a seven-year covenant with Satan's emissary, the MOL.

The discussion of the MOL indicated that this man is a future, Gentile world-ruler who comes into prominence at the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week. This man is revealed when he establishes the seven-year covenant spoken of in Daniel 9:27. It is widely acknowledged that Daniel gave considerable description of this man's character and conduct. The exegesis of 2 Thessalonians showed that Paul also had much to say about this man. He is proud, self-exalting, irreligious, and even demands that people worship him. On this Daniel and Paul find perfect agreement.

However, it was also shown that the church will never know this man's identity, for the rapture will take place before his identity is made known. The church's knowledge of him comes from Paul's and Daniel's teachings.

Paul believed that the coming of Christ was very close. Because of this. It was Paul's firm expectation that sometime very soon the Jews would fill up the measure of their sins to the fullest. Paul believed that the apostasy could come at any time when Israel entered into a covenant with Satan's man, the MOL. Of course, Paul also believed that these phenomena were contingent on the rapture of the

church. These two events would come immediately after the rapture of the church and thus inaugurate Daniel's seventieth week, thus beginning the DOL.

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