

A stylized mountain range graphic in white and light blue. The word 'ENCOURAGEMENT' is written in a bold, blocky font across the top of the mountain. Below it, the word 'HOPE' is written in a similar font, with the 'H' and 'O' of the second line overlapping the 'H' and 'O' of the first line. The entire graphic is set against a dark blue background with a subtle pattern of diagonal lines.

ENCOURAGEMENT
HOPE

A study from the books of Thessalonians



ITALY

ADRIATIC SEA

MACEDONIA

Philippi

Thessalonica

Berea

Troas

AEGEAN SEA

ASIA

IONIAN SEA

ACHAIA

Athens

Ephesus

Corinth

PELOPONNESE

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Macedonia and Achaia

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CRETE



2 Thessalonians chapter 1

*Second letter written a few months after 1 Thessalonians

*Paul probably had received a second report from the church in Thessalonica



Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2



We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love [ἀγάπη *agape*] of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 2 Thessalonians 1:3



therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

2 Thessalonians 1:4



This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5:41-42



Types of Persecutions

- From governmental leaders, policies
- From non-believers
- From fellow believers
- From business associates
- From family members



For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8



These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

* The punishment of the wicked will be neither temporary nor will it be annihilation, but it will continue throughout eternity and those being punished will be conscious. It is eternal death as opposed to eternal life (see Matthew 25:46). – Bible Knowledge Commentary



To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy [ἀξίως *axios*] of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power [δύναμις *dunamis*], 2 Thessalonians 1:11



so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 1:12

*How will the name of our Lord Jesus be glorified in our lives? In our church?



2 Thessalonians chapter 2



Paul had instructed the Thessalonians from the Old Testament concerning the day of the Lord when he preached to them in person. The day of the Lord is the period of history mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament during which God will bring judgment and blessing on the people of the earth in a more direct, dramatic, and drastic way than ever before (cf. Isa. 13:6, 9; Zeph. 1:14–16). From other New Testament revelation concerning this period of time it is believed that this will begin after the Rapture of the church, and will include the Tribulation and the Millennium.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul had taught them that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2). This instruction raised a question in his readers' minds. It must have seemed to some of them that the day of the Lord had already come. After all, the persecutions they were experiencing seemed to be what the prophets had predicted when they wrote about the great calamities coming on God's people and the world in the day of the Lord. The Thessalonians apparently had received instruction from other teachers to the effect that they were indeed experiencing the judgments of the day of the Lord, that is, the Great Tribulation. But if this were so, how could Paul's previous instruction that they would be caught up and escape the wrath of God coming on the earth be true? Paul wrote this section (2 Thess. 2:1–5) to straighten out the matter.

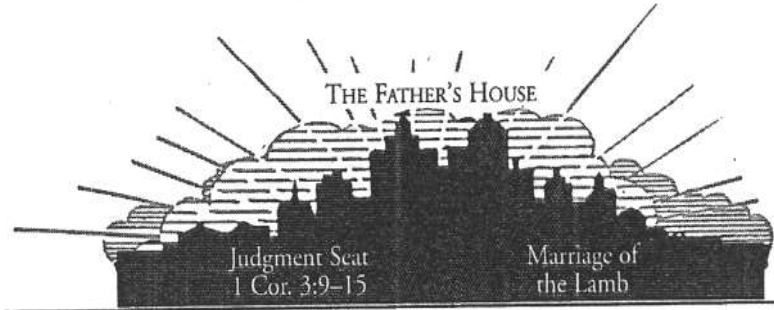
Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming [παρουσία *parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him [Rapture], that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message [sermon] or a [forged] letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2



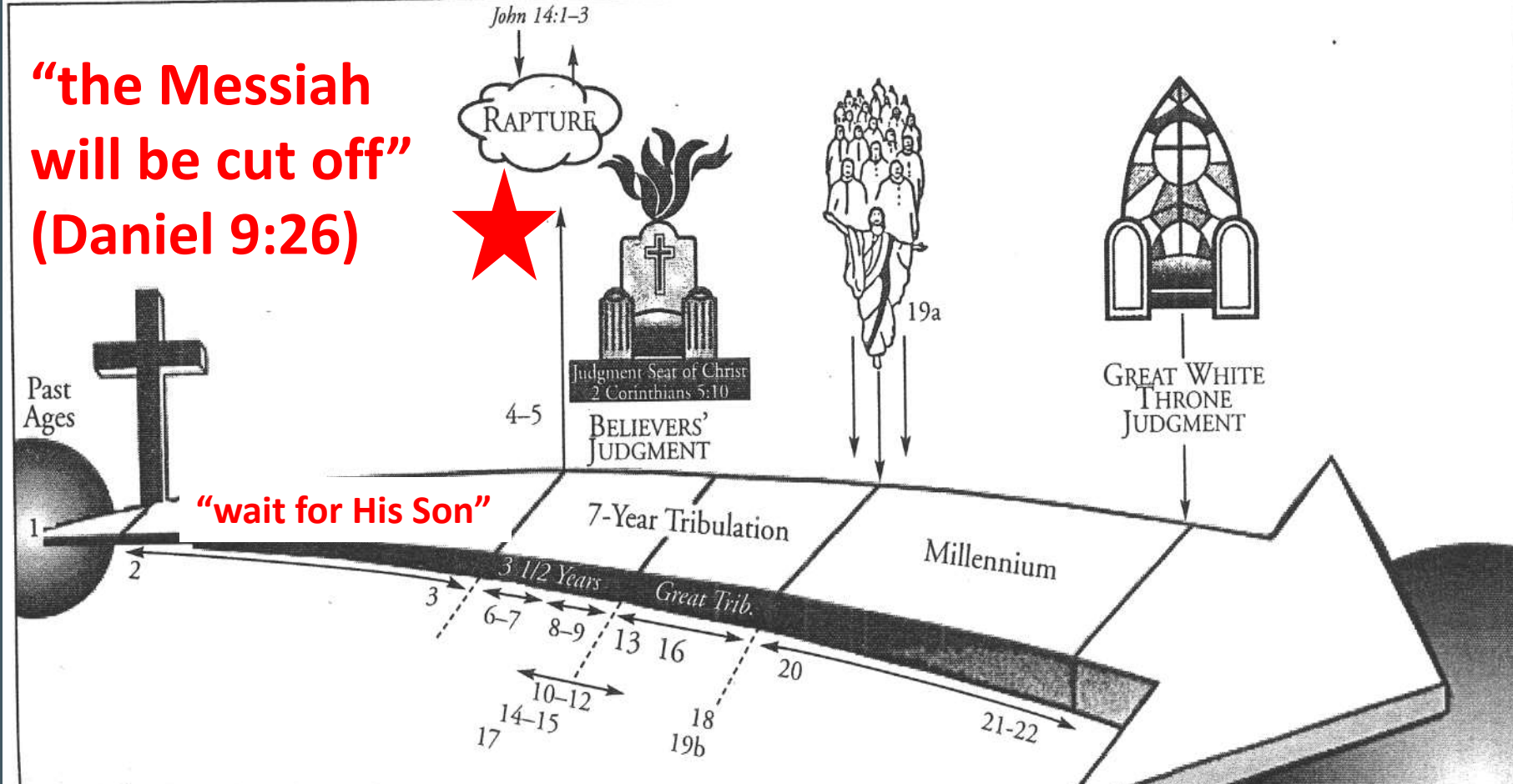
The erroneous message which all these voices echoed was that the day of the Lord had arrived; the Thessalonians were in it. But if this were so, the believers were wondering, how could Paul speak of the Lord's return as preceding the day of the Lord? And what about those promises that they would not see God's wrath? It is clear that Paul had taught them a pre-tribulational Rapture. Their confusion arose because they could not distinguish their present troubles from those of the day of the Lord. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

- and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10
- For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.
1 Thessalonians 5:9-10





“the Messiah will be cut off” (Daniel 9:26)



and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-16



From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians...

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up [ἄρπάζω *harpazo*, raptured] up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18

The Latin Vulgate translates the Greek ἀρπαγησόμεθα as *rapiemur* meaning "we are caught up" or "we are taken away" from the Latin verb *rapio* meaning "to catch up" or "take away." – Wikipedia



Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [Day of the Lord] will not come unless the apostasy [rebellion] comes first, and the man of lawlessness [anti-Torah] is revealed, the son of destruction [anti-Christ], 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. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

2 Thessalonians 2:3-5



What does the apostasy (rebellion) look like?

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 1 Timothy 4:1



What does the apostasy (rebellion) look like?

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these. 2 Timothy 3:1-5



What does the false teaching look like?

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 2 Peter 2:1-3



Who would listen to false teaching?

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4



Has the anti-Christ come to power yet?

And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2:6-7





How will Antichrist come to power?

Paul Henri-Spaak, president of the United Nations General Assembly (1946-1947) and Secretary General of NATO (1957-1961), prime minister of Belgium and a proponent of socialism and one-world government, said this in a General Session of the UN in 1957:

It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and **authority** over every tribe and people and tongue and nation **was given to him**. Revelation 13:7

“We do not want another committee. We have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people, and to lift us out of the economic morass in which we are sinking. Send us such a man and, be he God or the devil, we will receive him.”



Who or what is restraining the satanically empowered movement against God's law and is postponing the revelation of the man of sin?

The Holy Spirit of God is the only Person with sufficient (supernatural) power to do this restraining. How does He do it? Through Christians, whom He indwells and through whom He works in society to hold back the swelling tide of lawless living. How will He be taken out of the way? When the church leaves the earth in the Rapture, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way in the sense that His unique lawlessness-restraining ministry through God's people will be removed. The removal of the Restrainer at the time of the Rapture must obviously precede the day of the Lord. Paul's reasoning is thus a strong argument for the pre-tribulational Rapture: the Thessalonians were not in the Great Tribulation because the Rapture had not yet occurred.

After the removal of restraint the world will plunge headlong into lawlessness and the man of sin will be revealed. This man's name is never given in the Bible, but he will be known by his actions. He is also spoken of in Daniel 9:26–27 and 11:36–12:1. - Bible Knowledge Commentary



Old Testament Prophecies concerning anti-Christ

“In the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; he will destroy mighty men and the holy people.”

Daniel 8:23-24



“And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes [Messiah Jesus], but he will be broken without human agency. The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; but keep the vision secret [preserve it] , for it pertains to many days in the future.” Daniel 8:25-26



Daniel 8:23-25 gives hints about the coming anti-Christ

1. He will achieve great power by subduing others (v. 24).
2. He will rise to power by promising false security (v. 25).
3. He will be intelligent and persuasive (v. 23).
4. He will be controlled by another (v. 24), that is, Satan.
5. He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugate Israel to his authority (v. 24-25).
6. He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 25).
7. His rule will be terminated by divine judgment (v. 25).

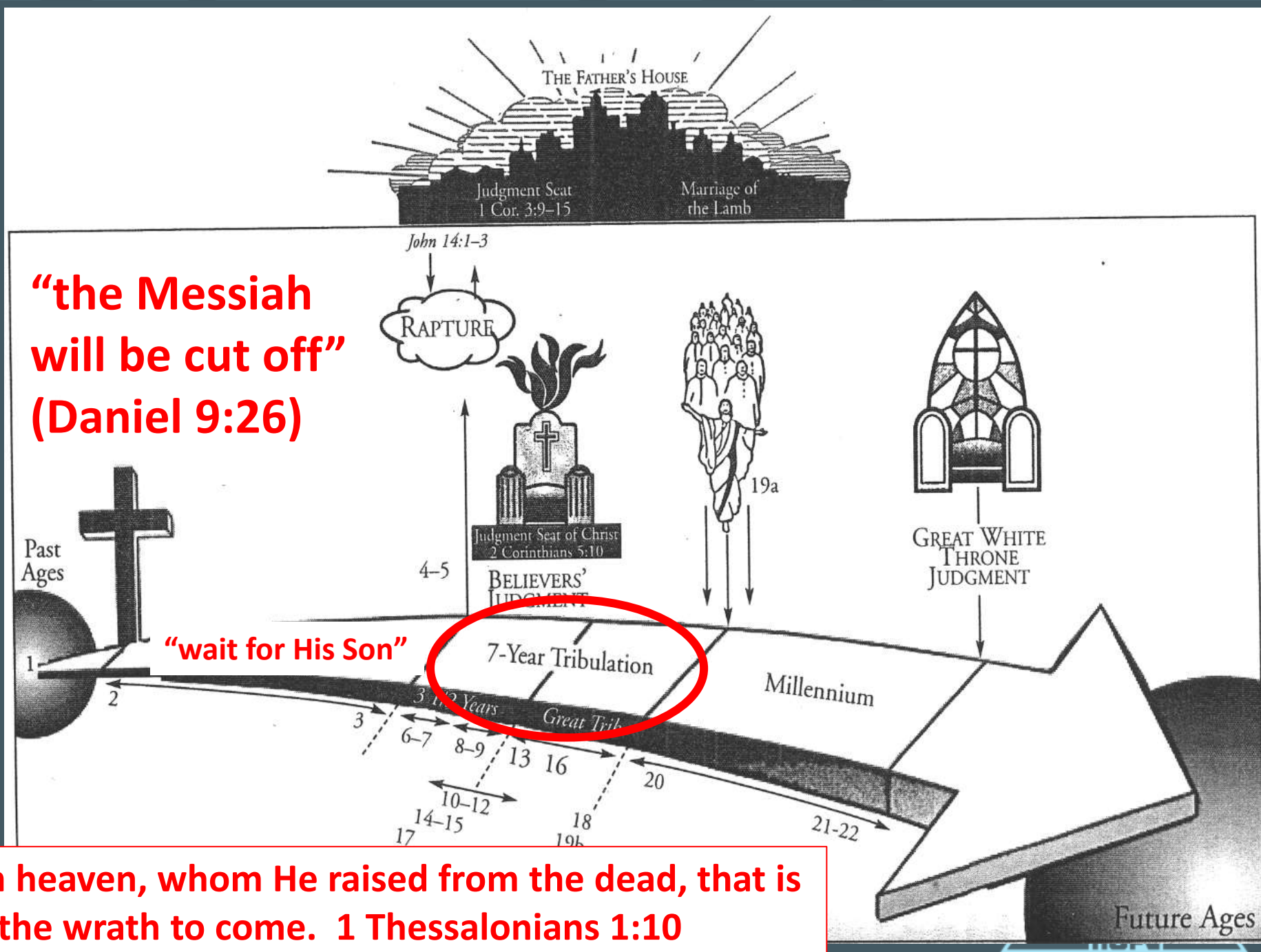
“And he [anti-Christ] will make a firm covenant with the many [Israel and nations] for one week [“seven”, the 7 year Tribulation], but in the middle of the week [after 3.5 years] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” Daniel 9:27



We presently live in the gap between the 69th and 70th weeks (sevens) of Daniel's vision in Daniel 9.

The 70th and final week (7 years) will begin with the Great Tribulation.

The Great Tribulation begins after the Church of Jesus Christ exits the earth at the Rapture.



“the Messiah will be cut off” (Daniel 9:26)

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10

Why will people choose to follow anti-Christ?

“I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?’” Revelation 13:3-4



“There was given to him [anti-Christ] a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months [3.5 years] was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.” Revelation 13:5-7



Biblical descriptions for anti-Christ

- Anti-Christ – 1 John 2:18
- The Little Horn – Daniel 7:8
- The Fierce King – Daniel 8:23
- A Master of Intrigue – Daniel 8:23
- The Prince Who is to Come – Daniel 9:26
- The Worthless Shepherd – Zechariah 11:17
- The Man of Lawlessness – 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- The One Who Brings Destruction – 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- The Beast – Revelation 13:11



Then that lawless one [anti-Christ] will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose 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, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10



What finally happens to anti-Christ?

- “But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.” Daniel 7:26
- “And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency.” Daniel 8:25
- “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.” Revelation 19:20



For this reason God will send upon them [those who refuse to place faith in Messiah Jesus] a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12



But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm [in the face of persecution] and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15



Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17



Next week...

2 Thessalonians chapter 3



Lessons for Us... 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

- The “Day of the Lord” is coming, a promised period of blessing and judgment
- The “Day of the Lord” has not happened yet because the preceding events have not yet occurred
- As the “Day of the Lord” approaches, the world will see an increase in false (unbiblical) teaching
- As the “Day of the Lord” approaches, the world will see an increase in those who believe false (unbiblical) teaching
- Followers of Jesus are called to “stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught”



What shall we do while we wait?

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12



What shall we do while we wait?

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

1 Timothy 4:10

