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For the majority of Adventists this is a very easy question to answer, however, there is more to the question than meets the eye.

**2 Thessalonians 2**

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

In the time of Paul the 'man of sin' had not been revealed, however, it was very obvious that the mystery of iniquity had been at work. The phrase "only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" was a key used by SDA pioneers to understand who the 'man of sin' is.

William Prescott describes who the ' man of sin' is:

Now it has been the purpose of Satan all these centuries to put something else in the place of Christ, himself if possible,-at all events, to turn away the minds of men from the worship of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. By reading two prophecies, and putting them together, we shall see the force of this working of Satan, through an agency through which his work has been carried on more successfully and for a longer time than through any other agency in the history of the world. CAS 31.1

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! now art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:12-14. This scripture evidently speaks of the fall of Satan and the reason for it; for Lucifer, “the light bearer,” by his own course of rebellion became Satan, “the adversary.” “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. Every one knows that this prophecy refers to the papacy, and every one who puts those two scriptures together can see that they represent exactly the same spirit,-I will exalt myself above God. CAS 31.2

In the papacy we have, in organized form, the greatest manifestation of the working of Satan that this world has ever seen; and the whole principle of the papacy is self-exaltation, the very principle that characterized Satan at the beginning, the very principle which led to his downfall. And this organized power steps forth and claims just what this prophecy says that it should claim,-that it stands in the place of God. The pope, the head of this church, is called the vicar of Christ, or the vicegerent ofChrist, that is, he is the one who rules in the place of Christ. Or, in other words, he has put himself in the place of Christ. He poses as the substitute of Christ. That is simply the same old scheme of the devil. He wanted Christ’s place, he wanted the honor and worship that belong to Christ; and this organized manifestation of the spirit and the working of Satan is the same thing over again. It is putting some one else in the place of Christ. And not only that, but the papacy claims to control the saving power of God, that is, his creative power. CAS 31.3

William Prescott is highlighting a key Adventist belief that identifies the 'man of sin' as the Papacy. Traditional SDA interpretation concludes this because the power that was taken out of the way in 2 Thessalonians 2: 7 was Paganism or Pagan Rome which then gave way to Papal Rome and the power held by the Popes as the supposed vice regent of Christ on earth. He also makes the connection between the papacy and Satan clear - he describes it as "the greatest manifestation of the working of Satan that this world has ever seen."

Understanding 2 Thessalonians 2 is also imperative to those who are living in the final days of this world's history. The key to understanding who the 'man of sin' is in the context of **NOW**

will protect us from the 'lie' or delusion that will be believed by those "who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2: 11, 12

The application of 2 Thessalonians 2 to the Papacy is direct recognition of Satan's overwhelming influence in the development of the universal religion of Catholicism and its power to 'change God's times and laws' (Daniel 7:25). But upon further examination we find that there are important clues or keys in Paul's record about the revelation of the 'man of sin' that place the final fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2 in the last days of this world's history.

The first key Paul reveals is found in verse seven:

7 For G1063 the mystery G3466 of iniquity G458 doth G1754 already G2235 work G1754: only G3440 he who now G737 letteth G2722 will let, until G2193 he be taken G1096 out of G1537 the way G3319.

In this verse there are some important Greek words that have not been translated as clearly as they could have been in the KJV version. With a more clearer and accurate translation we can gain a more complete picture of whom the 'man of sin' is.

The word 'letteth' in Greek is defined in the Thayer and Strong's concordance as:

G2722

Original: κατέχω

Transliteration: katechō

Phonetic: kat-ekh'-o

Thayer Definition:

to hold back, detain, retain

from going away

to restrain, hinder (the course or progress of)

that which hinders, Antichrist from making his appearance

to check a ship's headway, i.e. to hold or head the ship

to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of

to get possession of, take

to possess

Origin: from G2596 and G2192

TDNT entry: 15:49,3

Part(s) of speech: Verb

Strong's Definition: From G2596 and G2192; to hold down (fast), in various applications (literally or figuratively): - have, hold (fast), keep (in memory), let, X make toward, possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold.

Taking into consideration this meaning instead of the word 'letteth' the text would read:

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now HOLDS DOWN or RESTRAINS will HOLD, until he be taken out of the way.

The mystery of iniquity is being restrained or held back until he be TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. We now need to look at the Greek meaning of TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY:

G1096

Original: γίνομαι

Transliteration: ginomai

Phonetic: ghin'-om-ahee

Thayer Definition:

to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being

to become, i.e. to come to pass, happen

of events

to arise, appear in history, come upon the stage

of men appearing in public

to be made, finished

of miracles, to be performed, wrought

to become, be made

Origin: a prolongation and middle voice form of a primary verb

TDNT entry: 12:21,1

Part(s) of speech: Verb

Strong's Definition: A prolonged and middle form of a primary verb; to cause to be (" gen" -erate), that is, (reflexively) to become (come into being), used with great latitude (literally, figuratively, intensively, etc.): - arise be assembled, be (come, -fall, -have self), be brought (to pass), (be) come (to pass), continue, be divided, be done, draw, be ended, fall, be finished, follow, be found, be fulfilled, + God forbid, grow, happen, have, be kept, be made, be married, be ordained to be, partake, pass, be performed, be published, require, seem, be showed, X soon as it was, sound, be taken, be turned, use, wax, will, would, be wrought.

The Greek word for the word **TAKEN** is the word ginomai which commonly means to be generated, come into existence or to arise or appear in history. The Greek word for **OUT** refers to from where something is proceeding or coming from:

G1537

Original: ἐκ ἐξ

Transliteration: ek ex

Phonetic: ek

Thayer Definition:

out of, from, by, away from

Origin: a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause

TDNT entry: literal or figurative

Part(s) of speech: Preposition

Strong's Definition: A primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence motion or action proceeds), from, out (of place, time or cause; literally or figuratively; direct or remote): - after, among, X are, at betwixt (-yond), by (the means of), exceedingly, (+ abundantly above), for (-th), from (among, forth, up), + grudgingly, + heartily, X heavenly, X hereby, + very highly, in,. .. ly, (because, by reason) of, off (from), on, out among (from, of), over, since, X thenceforth, through, X unto, X vehemently, with (-out). Often used in composition, with the same general import; often of completion .

And finally the words: **THE WAY** which in the Greek means **the middle or in the midst of**.

G3319

Original: μέσος

Transliteration: mesos

Phonetic: mes'-os

Thayer Definition:

middle

the midst

in the midst of, amongst

Origin: from G3326

TDNT entry: None

Part(s) of speech: Adjective

Strong's Definition: From G3326; middle (as adjective or [neuter] noun): - among, X before them, between, + forth, mid [-day, -night], midst, way.

Let's compare the KJV translation to what we have discovered about the Greek meanings of the words:

2 Thessalonians 2: 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2: 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now RESTRAINS will HOLD, until he ARISES FROM THE MIDST.

Examine the translation for yourself. The KJV translation in this instance has hidden the real intent of Paul's prophetic description. The 'he' who will arise out of the midst is the 'man of sin' referred to in verses 3 and 4:

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

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Seventh Day Adventists are familiar with the prophecies of Ellen White who has stated clearly that Satan will personate Christ before the real coming of Christ himself:

Fallen angels from heaven form confederation with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be made void by the nations of our world. Rebellion against God’s holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and exalt him to the place of God. But Omnipotence will interpose, and to the apostate churches that unite in the exaltation of Satan, the sentence will go forth, “Therefore her plagues shall come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord who judgeth her.” EA 103.3

Lt 57, 1893

Written in 1893 Ellen White clearly identifies that Satan as an angel of light will be exalted by the deceived. It is only after he appears that the law of God will be fully made void.

That revelation is now being made. The man of sin to whom the apostle calls our attention is being revealed. The great controversy will wax stronger as we near the close of this earth’s history. 12LtMs, Ms 141a, 1897, par. 26

What is sin? “Sin is the transgression of the law.” [1 John 3:4.] In acting out his principles, the man of sin “exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself to be God.” [2 Thessalonians 2:4.] So the prophet writes of Satan, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the earth which did weaken the nations. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. ... I will be like the Most High. Yea, thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that look upon thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?” [Isaiah 14:12-16.] 12LtMs, Ms 141a, 1897, par. 27

Ellen White had already labelled the Papacy and its leadership under consecutive popes as the 'man of sin' in The Great Controversy 1888 edition pg. 356.1. But in 1897 she recognised "that revelation is now being made" and the man of sin was being revealed at that time. A direct connection was made with Satan - he was the man of sin and would also make the earth to tremble and shake kingdoms (Isaiah 14: 12-16). It was as if the final piece of the puzzle was settling into place. The Papacy had fully represented Satan and his desire to rule on earth so much so that Ellen White described the Pope as Satan's 'right-hand man' and also his representative. Yet she also recognised that scripture was clear that Satan was not only the originator of sin but the final 'man of sin ' highlighted by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Isaiah 14.

Satan will work miracles to deceive those who dwell on the earth. Spiritualism will do its work, by causing the dead to be personated. Those religious bodies who refuse to hear God’s message of warning will be under strong deception, and will unite with the civil power in persecuting the church. The Protestant churches will unite with the papal power in persecuting the commandment-keeping people of God. This union will constitute the great system of persecution which will exercise spiritual tyranny over the consciences of men. 15LtMs, Ms 16, 1900, par. 7

“He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake like a dragon.” [Verse 11.] This lamblike power unites with the dragon in making war upon those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Though professing to be followers of the Lamb of God, men become imbued with the dragon-spirit. They profess to be meek and humble, but they speak and legislate with the spirit of Satan, showing by the actions that they are the opposite of what they profess to be. And Satan unites with Papists and Protestants, acting in concert with them as the god of this world, dictating to men as if they were the subjects of his kingdom, to be handled and governed and controlled as he pleases. 15LtMs, Ms 16, 1900, par. 8

If men will not agree to trample under foot the commandments of God, they are brought before councils and fined or imprisoned. “He causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead.” “He had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” [Verses 16, 15.] Thus Satan usurps the prerogatives of Jehovah. The man of sin sits in the seat of God, proclaiming himself to be God, and acting above God. 15LtMs, Ms 16, 1900, par. 9

In 1900 Ellen White envisions Satan in the future as 'the man of sin' sitting in the seat of God and uniting with the Protestants and Papists dictating to them, governing and controlling them at will. Satan proclaims himself to be God and acts above Him.

The record of Christ's contest with Satan was chronicled for the help and encouragement of the people of God today. In this contest Christ worked no miracle and gave no sign. His only dependence was God and his word. In the future, Satan is to come down with great power, to work signs and wonders. He will bring down fire from heaven in the presence of his devotees, and, to those who have allowed themselves to be led away from the only true foundation,—the word of God,—will give proof of his authority. He will deceive if possible the very elect. Those who are standing firm upon the word of the everlasting God will meet Satan with the weapon with which Christ met him,—“It is written.” This will be of more power than the working of miracles. The people of God will conquer through the Holy Spirit's working, which is stronger than miracles or aught else. It is from the Lord that we are to obtain power. SW March 1, 1904, Art. B, par. 39

In 1904 she wrote that Satan would deceive if possible the very elect - with his signs and wonders (Matthew 24:24) the very lying signs and wonders referred to by Paul in addition to Christ himself : 2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

2 Thessalonians 2: 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now RESTRAINS will HOLD, until he ARISES FROM THE MIDST.

Satan's arising as the 'man of sin' takes place when God releases his restraint of him. In Revelation chapter 9 at the beginning of the fifth trumpet the releasing of the 'man of sin' takes place:

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

The fallen star or angel - Satan is given a key which enables him to open the bottomless pit. He arises with his evil angelic horde out of the midst personating Christ returning from heaven with selected saints who are determined to deceive if possible the very elect with their lying signs and wonders. The hold or restraint of Satan that Paul describes is released, yet God is still in control and Satan can only do what God permits. You are encouraged to download **'The Seven Trumpet' book** and read the **fifth trumpet study** to know more about this prophesied event.

The verses below make the following points clear:

\*Satan will work with all power and signs and lying wonders,

\*God allows this strong delusion

\*Those who have been deceived by unrighteousness are damned because they do not love the truth

2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

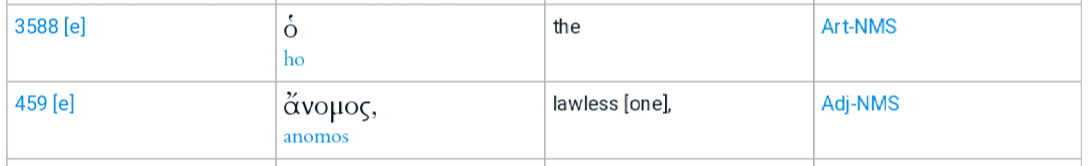
12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Another verse that SDA's need to understand more carefully in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2 is:

Verse 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Problematic interpretation arises with the first phrase: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed".

The particular words 'that Wicked' almost appear to identify an individual but is not an accurate translation of Paul's writing.



<https://biblehub.com/text/2_thessalonians/2-8.htm>

When examining the original Greek we find that the word 'THAT' has been added. The verse should look like this:

Verse 8 And then shall **THE LAWLESS** be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

What Paul is intending to do in this verse is summarise the outcome of the release of the 'man of sin'. The lawless or wicked will be revealed by their response to the 'man of sin's' signs and lying wonders. If they are deceived or prefer the deceivableness of un-righteousness they will be damned or destroyed with the brightness of the true Christ's coming as is enlarged upon in the following verses already previously stated:

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The outcome for those who are deceived by Satan's lying signs and wonders and who don’t love the truth is extremely sad. These people are described as 'lawless'. The law of God which the papacy changed under the influence of the spirit of Satan is what will be the test for God's professed people. Are you prepared to stand up and obey God's law in opposition to the law of the 'man of sin' or Satan? That is the question which will decide your destiny!