

The Mystery of Lawlessness Identified

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The Mystery of Lawlessness: An Analytical Examination

The term “mystery of lawlessness,” as presented in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, has been a subject of extensive theological analysis. To comprehend its essence, we can deconstruct the concept through a series of premises leading to a logical conclusion, incorporating relevant scriptural texts.

Premise 1: Definition of ‘Mystery’ in Biblical Context

In biblical literature, the term “mystery” (Greek: *mysterion*) refers to divine truths that were once concealed but have now been revealed to believers. These are not mysteries in the modern sense of unsolvable puzzles but are sacred secrets disclosed by God. For instance, Ephesians 3:4-5 states:

“... the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men...has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.”

Premise 2: Understanding ‘Lawlessness’

“Lawlessness” denotes a state of rebellion against God’s established order and commandments. It embodies actions and ideologies that oppose divine law, leading to moral and spiritual chaos. 1 John 3:4 elucidates:

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

Premise 3: The ‘Mystery of Lawlessness’ is Already at Work

Paul asserts that this mystery was already active during his time, indicating an ongoing, covert operation of lawlessness within the world. This suggests a hidden force influencing individuals and societies towards rebellion against God. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 affirms:

“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.”

Premise 4: Deceiving Spirits are agents of the ‘Mystery of Lawlessness’:

The “spirit...word...letter” shaking the minds of the Thessalonians with the false claim “the day of Christ had come” (2 Thessalonians 2:2) was the “mystery of lawlessness” already at work.

“Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.”

Premise 5: The identity of the “Restrainer” is the Holy Spirit

The “Restrainer” was therefore known to the Thessalonians to be the Holy Spirit as it was He who was restraining the lies about the Day of Christ directly and through Paul’s correction (2 Thessalonians 2:1-6):

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. (2 Thess. 2:1-6 NKJ)

Premise 6: Satan as the Principal Agent

Scriptural references identify Satan as the primary force behind this lawlessness. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the coming of the lawless one is described as being “according to the working of Satan,” highlighting his role in orchestrating this rebellion. The verse states:

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.”

Premise 7: Manifestation Through Deception and False Teachings

The mystery manifests through deceptive practices, including false teachings and misleading doctrines. 1 Timothy 4:1 warns of individuals following “deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,” illustrating the propagation of lawlessness through spiritual deception:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”

Additionally, 2 Corinthians 11:14 cautions:

“And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”

Premise 8: Deceiving spirits are the “deluding influence” God sends

God sent the “strong deluding influence” when the Holy Spirit stopped restraining the ‘mystery of lawlessness’ from inspiring “strong delusion” among those who perish.

7 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.

⁸ Then that lawless one 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;

⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (2 Thess. 2:7-12 NAS)

Conclusion: The 'Mystery of Lawlessness' as a Supernatural Campaign

Synthesizing these premises, the "mystery of lawlessness" can be understood as a divinely revealed truth about an ongoing, covert operation of rebellion against God's order, orchestrated by Satan. It operates through "deceiving spirits" promulgating heresy and apostasy. "Unrighteous deception" and false teachings, subtly influencing humanity towards lawlessness, that will be completely unrestrained in its ultimate revelation in the End Time culminating in belief in the Antichrist after the Church as 'fallen away' from its belief in Holy Scripture:

¹ Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thess. 2:1-4 NKJ)