

# Debate on Eschatology (AD 70 Doctrine)

Robert Waters -- Roy Runyon



(March 2022)

**Proposition:**

The Scriptures teach that a “falling away” (apostasy) must occur BEFORE the “man of sin” is to be destroyed at Christ’s coming. This man, described in detail by the apostle Paul, and depicted in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9, is the Roman papacy line of succession. The “man of sin” has not been destroyed; thus, there is a final coming of Christ for which we await.

Affirm: Robert Waters

Deny: Roy Runyon

## Waters' First Affirmative

### Proposition:

The Scriptures teach that a “falling away” (apostasy) must occur BEFORE the “man of sin” is to be destroyed at Christ’s coming. This man, described in detail by the apostle Paul, and depicted in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9, is the Roman papacy line of succession. The “man of sin” has not been destroyed; thus, there is a final coming of Christ for which we await.

In this discussion I shall endeavor to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the “man of sin,” whom Paul says Jesus will destroy at His coming, exists today. This assertion, when sustained, will prove without a doubt that Christ has yet to return. Such a discussion is needed because a significant number of Christians have come to believe, and teach, with an air of confidence, that there is no future coming of our Lord. This is not really a new notion (2 Tim. 2:18).

The “**man of sin**,” about whom Paul writes, as recorded in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, can be no other than the Roman papacy. Men have presented other theories, some of which may be backed up with some reasoning; but none of these theories completely fit the bill, as does the papacy (succession of popes).

In his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul wrote of the return of Christ. Unfortunately, some of the saints misunderstood—perhaps influenced by false teaching—and this prompted the need for a clarification, in a second letter, to correct the erroneous thinking. Apparently, some were advocating that the Lord had already returned. Paul begins addressing this error in 2 Thessalonians 2:1.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 **Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.**

So, in these two verses, Paul was clear and emphatic in proclaiming that Jesus had not yet come and that the false teachers, who fostered that idea, were not to be believed. Based on the phrase “**as from us**” it is evident that some were basing their false teaching on what they asserted that Paul, and/or other apostles, had said. As we see in verse 3, Paul warned about these false teachers and proceeded to explain why what they were saying was not true.

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;

In this passage, Paul is saying there will be a “falling away” BEFORE the coming of Christ. Once we identify this “falling away,” with which the “**man of sin**” is associated, it will become apparent that the preterist’s contention that Jesus came in AD 70, at the destruction of Jerusalem (a doctrine that has taken roots in the church in recent history), cannot be true. Paul made it CLEAR that a “falling away,” an apostasy, must come FIRST, and that the “**falling away**” had not YET come. And we shall show that it did not come until sometime AFTER AD 70.

Before we proceed to the next passage in our text, which describes the character of the line of popes in some detail, let’s look at what Paul wrote to Timothy about this same apostasy:

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Clearly, Paul was informing Timothy of an apostasy. It would be unreasonable to conclude that he referred to a DIFFERENT apostasy than the one discussed in the letter to the Thessalonians, without there being some evidence to support that idea. It seems apparent that the text was intended to further describe the papacy, which helps clarify who the “**man of sin**” is and allows us to establish that the final coming of Christ is future. The phrase “**forbidding to marry**” may or may not have originated with the Catholic church, but they were guilty of it, and they continue to do it by asserting that divorce does not end marriage.

Another phrase, “**commanding to abstain from meats,**” is also understood to describe the Catholic Church, as certain meats are forbidden on specific days. This is further evidence pointing us in the direction of viewing the “**man of sin**” as being the papacy.

Now back to 2 Thessalonians 2:

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.

No character in history better typifies the above than the pope. Below are some quotes (more can be added if this is not a point of agreement) that establish the claims:

“To believe that our Lord God the Pope has not the power to decree as he is decreed, is to be deemed heretical.” -?i the Gloss “Extravagantes” of Pope John XXII Cum inter, Tit. XIV, Cap. IV. Ad Callem Sexti Decretalium, Paris, 1685.

“The Pope and God are the same, so he has all power in Heaven and earth.” Barclay, Chapter XXVII, p. 218, “Cities Petrus Bertanous,” attributed to Pope Pius V.

“We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty” – Pope Leo XIII Encyclical Letter of June 20, 1894.

“The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, he is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.” *Catholic National*, July 1895.

“Our Lord God the pope; another God upon the earth, king of kings, and lord of lords” (Newton, p. 456).

The papacy claims headship over the church on earth. So, prophecies about the “**man of sin**,” relative to his thinking of himself to be equal to God and worthy of worship, and presenting himself as if he is God, are clearly descriptive of the line of popes.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity **DOETH ALREADY WORK**: only he who now letteth [restrains] will let, until he be taken out of the way.

The early stage of this ecclesiastical apostasy was already at work in the early church (“**doth already work**”). Christ established his church in the first century (AD 33; Acts 2). Paul tells us, “**He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers**” (Eph. 4:11). There is no mention of a pope and neither Jesus nor Paul elevated one pastor over another. Unfortunately, men deviated from God’s pattern regarding bishops, pastors or elders (descriptive terms for the same office), in their quest for power, honor and praise.

The first indication of this apostasy was in making a distinction among the terms “bishops,” “elders,” and “pastors,” which, again, are terms used interchangeably for the same office (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The title “**bishop**” was given more significance and was applied to only one man who usurped authority over a local congregation (3 John 1:10). That progressed to a bishop's ruling over not just the congregation where he worshiped, but over a “diocese,” or several congregations in a certain area (1 Pet. 5:2). Due to these attitudes and actions, eventually one man claimed authority over the entire church.

While Catholics have endeavored to establish a successive line of popes, starting with Peter, these men did not begin to enjoy significant success in errantly usurping authority until around 366. Another important date is 496, and 606 has long been understood as being the date of the first recognized pope. But accuracy regarding these dates is not important. What is important is that we see the slow developing succession in fulfillment of Paul's prophecy of the falling away of the church and the rise of the man of sin.

The rise of the “**man of sin**” is the ultimate result of the falling away from the faith. It was an ecclesiastical issue that progressed from within the church—not from Roman emperors, not from Judaism, and not from some man who could be identified as the anti-Christ. (1 John 2:18). Note also that the word “*apostasia*” (noun, translated “**falling away**”) indicates a definite movement—not merely a defection. It was yet to come! It had not evolved to the point where it could be identified. It was in the development stage. And Paul did not say it was at hand, or near, as was the case of Jesus's warning regarding a previous “*coming*.”

In some sense, the “**man of sin**” would **sit in the temple of God**. The word “temple” is not a reference to the Jewish house of worship, which rules out the idea that the “man of sin” was the high priest. The Greek word *naos* (G3485) was used by Paul eight times and never applies to the Jewish temple (*hieron* G2413). The implication of Paul's warning is that this sinful man would be viewed as being a “church” character. This person represents himself as God by making claims that belong only to deity; by receiving adoration reserved exclusively for God; and, by appropriating authoritative privileges that belong to God and God only.

The expression “sitteth” hints of the arrogance of the man in Paul's prophecy. The language describes the “**man of sin**” as attempting to obtain tribute, praise, and honor from people. The phrase “**sets himself forth as God**” is continual; it wasn't something that was happening at the time (certainly it was not in full bloom) and not something, or someone, that would soon be destroyed.

Paul spoke of some influence that restrained the emergence of the “**man of sin**” —holding him in check, so to speak. This force was strongly associated with a PERSON as suggested by the wording “**he who restrains.**” Some have suggested it was Paul himself, but it more likely was some power not related to the church. Unlike the “**man of sin,**” whose identity was later to be revealed, the early saints knew personally of this restraining force. “**Now you know**” (*oidate*)—*Vine's* says the word means: “to know from observation.” This restraining force, likely related to Rome, would be removed, making way for the “**man of sin**” (the succession of popes) to advance further and eventually become what we know it to be today.

**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:**

After the restraining influence was taken out of the way, “**that wicked**” would be revealed. This wicked one (the succession of them) the Lord shall destroy when he comes.

**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.**

He deceives those who **love not the truth** through “**lying wonders.**” Bloomfield calls these “pretended miracles.” In identifying the “**man of sin,**” one must look for a post-apostolic organization that claims to prove its authenticity by miracles, as does the Roman Catholic Church.

(See [https://catholicmiracles.org/saint-miracles/st-teresa-of-avila/.](https://catholicmiracles.org/saint-miracles/st-teresa-of-avila/))

The “**man of sin**” (succession of popes), whom Paul said “doeth already work” (had its beginning), would endure until the end of time, that is, until the final coming of Christ, at which time He will deliver up the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24). At that time, the “**man of sin**” will be destroyed along with others who “**know not God and who obey not the gospel.**”

**2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;**

In view of this, the "man of sin" cannot be some persecuting enemy that vanished centuries ago. History tells us Rome fell in AD 476. Following this event, great power was shifted to the church. After Rome fell, the apostate church of that day increased in power. The apostate church clearly had its beginning in the first century; yet, this movement continues to this day, and, according to Paul's prophecy, will remain until the final coming of Christ.

Conclusion:

That 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 is a prophecy of the papacy (the pope's being the "man of sin") has been the predominant view for more than a thousand years. It is the view of some of the most brilliant scholars who ever lived. But the main reason I hold the view I have presented is that it is the only system that fits the demands of the passage under study—specifically regarding the "man of sin." No Caesar did, no Jewish priest did, and no "anti-Christ" did. Preterists generally take the position that the "man of sin" was the high priest. We ask the reader to carefully compare the evidence my opponent presents (whichever view he holds) with the facts and reasoning presented herein.

Considering the number of people who have been deceived into following the pope over the centuries—the consequences of this gigantic false organization, and false doctrines that deceive—it is implausible that God would not warn of such an organization, but instead merely warn of something that soon ceased to exist. There can be no doubt that the "man of sin" is the succession of popes, who would be destroyed at the coming of Christ. Thus, preterists are mistaken in their view that the end came in AD 70, that Christ returned at that time, and that there is not going to be any future coming. These people call themselves "full preterists" and they refer to those of us who look to a future and final coming of our Lord as "futurists." Until the arguments I've presented are soundly defeated, I'll remain a futurist. My prayer is that preterists, and any who might be deceived by them in the future, will consider Paul's prophecy about "the man of sin" and see that the text upholds the idea that the final coming of Christ is yet to come.

## Runyon's First Negative

Brother Waters has not proven "beyond a reasonable doubt" that Paul's "man of sin" is the papacy, though he has very effectively elucidated what "has been the predominant view for more than a thousand years." I have no disagreement with this truth, however, since the majority of the evidence Robert offers for this view is extra-biblical, it's not based on *exegesis* of scripture; rather, based on this secular evidence, and the admitted popular view, Robert is *eisegeting* these ideas into the texts which he references, as he reconstructs *what the texts say*. In other words, Robert has ignored, or, perhaps, simply doesn't comprehend the context of Paul's Thessalonian letters, which I will demonstrate by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," (1Co 2:13).

I want to point out the very basic hermeneutic, of when we look at text #1 which speaks of "The Day of the Lord" (DOTL), and includes the constituent elements of "ABC"; then we look at text #2 which also speaks of "the DOTL," but only mentions the constituent elements of "XYZ," then we can't disregard "ABC" when looking at text #2, nor the elements of "XYZ" when looking at text #1. I'm quite confident that Robert understands this principle when we study the plan of salvation, as not every conversion text mentions repentance, or faith, or baptism. Good hermeneutics demand that once repentance is stated as necessary in the salvific process, it is inherent in every conversion text even when it's not mentioned.

As Paul posits the revealing of the "man of sin" (MOS) just prior to the DOTL in 2 Thessalonians 2, the **timing** of the DOTL of chapter two must agree with Paul's forecast of the DOTL of 2 Thessalonians 1, 1 Thessalonians 4&5, and 1 Corinthians 15, as Brother Robert seems to indicate in his Affirmative.

Robert correctly points out how Paul begins this text by telling the Thessalonian brethren that the DOTL had not yet come as some apostle impersonators were claiming; however, Robert has missed a crucial *element* in this text, i.e., "*the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (v.1) at the DOTL (v.2) is "*the 'parousia' of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" It would be the brightness of Christ's *parousia* which would destroy the MOS (v.8). Since Robert correctly avers that "the **coming** [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ" of this text in chapter 2, and chapter 1, is the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, then he has inadvertently made a fatal admission: fatal to his proposition, as well as his entire paradigm.

"Parousia," a singular noun, has only one meaning, though it has different applications. It is applied by Paul to the **presence** of Stephanas and Fortunatus, (1Co 16:17), and the **presence** of Titus (2Co 7:6). The false apostles at Corinth denigrated Paul saying his, "*letters...are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible,*" (2Co 10:10); and Paul applied the term to himself saying, "*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,*" (Phil 2:12). The point here is that *parousia*, being a *noun*, (not a verb which denotes action)



refers not to the motivating of an individual from one point to another, but rather, the *presence* of the individual once they have arrived.

Another unavoidable point here is that no one has more than one presence; thus, as Robert correctly states that there is only one 2<sup>nd</sup> ('final') coming of the Lord; and, since Robert likewise applies this text to the 2<sup>nd</sup> ('final') coming of the Lord, then since Paul identifies this "**coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ," as "**the parousia**" of *Christ*, then every text which speaks of "the parousia of Christ" **must** agree regarding *when* it would occur. Again, this is fatal to Robert's proposition and paradigm.

In my Facebook Group, *What The Bible Says*, Robert recently argued that Matthew 24:3-33 applies to "the coming of Christ in judgment on Jerusalem..." Even though brother Waters attempted to establish two comings in Jesus' Olivet Discourse, Robert is tangled up in a fatal self-contradiction now that he has inadvertently admitted to the contextual fact that the *coming* of the Lord of Paul's Thessalonian epistles is the one-and-only 2<sup>nd</sup> ('final') *coming* of the Lord, while Paul identifies **this coming** as the **parousia** of the Lord, (vs.2&8). The inescapable problem for Robert's position is that "the **coming** of Christ" of Matthew 24:3-33 which Robert applies to the destruction of Jerusalem (DOJ) is "the **parousia** of Christ," just like, "the **coming** [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ" of 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2.

Recalling, then, our basic hermeneutic cited above, the **timing** of the **parousia** of *Christ* in the Olivet Discourse was to occur in the generation which would see the Jewish temple dismantled, which again, Robert admits "this coming" occurred in AD 70. Consistent hermeneutics, then, forces the **timing** of the **parousia** of Matthew 24:3, 27, (**AND 37-39** which refutes Robert's "2 comings" theology) to be inherent in Paul's Thessalonian letters, just like repentance is inherent in conversion texts which don't specifically mention repentance. This agrees perfectly with James telling his audience to "*be patient therefore brethren until the parousia of the Lord,*" and that "**the parousia of the Lord is at hand,**" (Jas 5:8-9). The parousia was *imminent* during the ministry of the apostles, though it had not yet arrived per the false apostles' claims which Paul refutes in our text by pointing out that the MOS must first be revealed. Since the parousia was imminent, and since the MOS would be revealed just prior to the parousia of Christ, this contextual fact inarguably refutes Robert's proposition.

Paul wished that the hearts of the Thessalonian brethren be established, "*unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming* ←[parousia] *of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*" (1Th 3:13). Here, Paul is quoting from Zechariah 14:5. The context of Zechariah 12-14 would be when Jerusalem would become "*a cup of trembling...when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem,*" (12:2). It would be "*in that day*" (Zec 12:3,4,6,8,9,11; 13:1,2,4; 14:4,6,8,9,13,20,21) that "*living waters shall go out from Jerusalem*" (14:8); but it would be "*in that day*" that would "*be one day known only to the Lord,*" (14:7) which by the way is Matthew 24:36! It is from this "**Day of the Lord**" (14:1) context that Paul quotes in 1 Thessalonians 3:13, calling it

“the **parousia** of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” **Get that!!** Holy Spirit “moved” (2Pe 1:21) Zechariah to foretell the DOTL when he would “come with all his saints,” and Holy Spirit moved Paul to interpret that OT prophecy as “the parousia of Christ.” Paul then returns to this OT context in chapters 4 & 5, notice:

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that **we which are alive and remain unto the coming** ←[parousia] of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then **we which are alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord...But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night. For when **they** shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon **them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and **they** shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief,” (4:15-5:4).

You see, “you brethren” of 1:5:4 is the same “you brethren” of 2:2:1 in our text; and the DOTL coming like a thief in the night upon their persecutors of 1:5:3, is the same DOTL of 2:2:2 in our text. Why then would Paul tell the Thessalonian brethren that the DOTL would not overtake them like a thief in the night, if they were not going to live to see the DOTL?? Why would Paul go on in 2 Thessalonians 1 with this same thought, promising these Thessalonian brethren that *they* would receive relief from *their* persecution, “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **In flaming fire** taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction **from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**” (2:1:7-9), IF these brethren would not live to see the parousia of the Lord?

Brother Waters, please take note of the two phrases in bold: in the second phrase, Paul is quoting, **verbatim**, (LXX) from Isaiah 2:10,19&21 which context is that of the last days **Day of the LORD** judgment of Old Covenant Israel (Isa 2:1,2,4,12); in the first phrase, Paul is quoting, **verbatim**, (LXX) from Isaiah 66, notice:

“For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream...And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke **with flames of fire**,” (66:12-15).

It is from this OT context that Paul appropriates this DOTL language; however, the context of this prophecy cannot be an 'end of time' prediction, because of what the text goes on to foretell:

*“For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles,”* (66:18-19).

That this prophecy cannot be forecasting the DOTL at 'the end of time' is beyond debate, for no one could escape the end of time, nor would there be nations of Gentiles in need of hearing the message of the Lord. The only exegetical conclusion is that “those that escape” *the flaming fire* at the DOTL of Isaiah’s prediction would be those such as the Thessalonian brethren whom Paul said would escape the DOTL coming like a thief in the night (1:5:4), who would receive relief from the Jewish persecution at the DOTL when He would be revealed from heaven *in flaming fire* (2:1:7-9). Since Paul quotes from, and applies two OT prophetic texts which portend the judgment of Israel at the DOTL, rather than the imaginary 'end of time' scenario, then Robert’s proposition of the destruction of the MOS at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming being centuries outside the lifetime of “you brethren” to whom Paul is speaking, simply is untenable.

Robert’s posit that some of the Thessalonian saints had a misunderstanding regarding the DOTL is blatantly false, for Paul clearly said he didn’t need to write to them regarding the DOTL, for they knew perfectly of the times and seasons of the DOTL, (1Th 5:1f). Robert’s premise that the MOS is the Roman papacy likewise is blatantly false as I will demonstrate.

Robert’s first mistake here is typical due to the KJ translation. Paul did not say “an” apostasy must first come; rather, Paul said “THE” apostasy would come first. The definite article (the) makes it emphatic, for there could only be **one** “THE apostasy.” Recalling then our basic hermeneutic from above, we find Jesus forewarning His apostles of false teachers who would arise and deceive many and cause “*the love of **the many** to grow cold,*” (Mat 24:11f, KJ3, YLT, MLV, LITV). Again, per Robert’s admission, this portend applies to the DOJ in/by AD 70. By the time Paul wrote to Timothy, all those in Asia had turned away from Paul (2Ti 1:15, excepting the house of Onesiphorus, v.16), demonstrating that the apostasy had begun.

Paul’s MOS of necessity had to be alive when he wrote, for several reasons:

- 1) The Thessalonian brethren knew who was restraining the MOS;
- 2) The MOS could not have been “being restrained” if he were not yet living;
- 3) Paul said the MOS “*opposes*” (present tense) and “*exalts himself,*” (present tense), so per Robert’s own timeline, the papacy not becoming organized for another

**three full centuries** categorically falsifies his proposition;

4) The **present tense** verb rendered “*exalts himself,*” is **singular**, therefore, Robert’s assertion that Paul is identifying an indefinite but centuries-long succession of men is specious and untenable;

5) The term “*apodeiknumi*” rendered “showing” in the phrase “*showing himself that he is God*” (v.4), again is a present active verb tense, and, again, in the singular form; therefore, when Robert says, “The phrase ‘sets himself forth as God’ is continual...” he is correct; however, missing the present tense of the verb, and saying, “...it wasn’t something that was happening at the time” is patently false.

6) Paul said the MOS “*sits in the temple of God...*” Robert attempts to avoid the force of **what the text says** by averring that Paul never used *naos* to refer to the Jewish temple. For Robert to redefine “**the temple of God**” saying, “The implication of Paul’s warning is that this sinful man would be viewed as being a ‘church’ character” doesn’t even make good nonsense! Recalling our basic hermeneutic above, Jesus, twice used the term *naos* to identify the Holy Place within the Jerusalem temple complex (Mat 23:35; Luke 1:9); and, John employed the term to designate the measuring of the Holy Place to be trodden down of the Gentiles (Rev 11:1f). Since Paul added the qualifier “of God” to “the temple” Robert’s redefinition of the text is thoroughly falsified.

Robert’s proposition changes the *timing* of the context, i.e., Paul said when he who was restraining was removed, the MOS would be revealed, and this would be *when* the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming would occur. Robert posits the MOS as the papacy, becoming organized mid-fourth century, so, per his proposition and Affirmative, we have now been waiting *longer than Israel’s entire existence under the law of Moses!* Sorry, but that just won’t do!

If, when, brethren will lay aside their denominational commentaries, and study to *exegete* scripture, allowing scripture to interpret scripture, and the Bible to define its own terminology, then, the brotherhood will progress toward an unparalleled unity.

## **Waters' Reply to Runyon's Rebuttal**

### **Waters' Reply to Runyon's Rebuttal**

In my affirmative, I gave several reasons why the biblical teaching regarding the falling away and "man of sin" (MOS) was prophecy regarding the line of popes. I pointed out that Paul stated that this MOS would be destroyed at Christ's coming, which, considering this has yet to happen, proves Christ's coming has not yet occurred. I wrote:

Considering the number of people who have been deceived into following the pope over the centuries—the consequences of this gigantic false organization, and false doctrines that deceive—it is implausible that God would not warn of such an organization, but instead merely warn of something that soon ceased to exist.

To this Roy had no reply. Yet he insists that the detailed prophecy is about something else—something that does not fully fit the description. If he were right, it would also suggest that God completely failed to warn about the great apostasy of which we are familiar. Roy's apostasy is nothing more than a mere defection not related to the apostasy Paul warned about.

We had an agreement to limit discussion to the texts in the proposition, but Roy deviated from it to a large degree. He is supposed to be in the negative, but much of his efforts give the appearance of his being in the affirmative. I can understand why he did it. He has no real evidence, from the Bible or secular history, that supports his assertion that the MOS is not the succession of popes but is rather the Jewish high priest. And Roy was unable to refute the evidence, either from the Scriptures or secular history, that I used to sustain the proposition. I have no obligation to deal with anything Roy added that is outside the agreement. If a shepherd comes upon a sheep that a large python has wrapped himself around, intending to kill and swallow the sheep, the shepherd does not have to overpower the body of the snake. He needs only to cut off the head. This I have done. There is no need for me to deal with the numerous O.T. prophecies that preterists think support their position. I shall deal only with the scriptures and comments that are relevant to the agreed-upon proposition. The reader can read my article on Matthew 24 (which Roy brought up) at [www.Totalhealth.bz](http://www.Totalhealth.bz).

Considering that Roy supposedly has superior knowledge of prophecy, which preterists frequently abuse in their endeavor to prove their contention, is it not strange that he made some arguments that appear to have been made by one who does not recognize

the fact that the text (to which the debate is supposed to be limited) is prophecy? Yet he ignored this and applied the prophecy to the PRESENT. For example, he said the man of sin “had to be alive.” Paul said the movement (apostasy) was already at work—not that it was already established. Roy says the MOS was present. Paul said, “*even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan.*” Roy needs this to say, “who is already here.” Who should we believe, Roy or Paul?

Something would happen FIRST “*And then shall be revealed the lawless one.*” Thus, the MOS was to come LATER. He (the succession of popes that continue to this day) would be slain in the FUTURE (see vs. 8-9). So, it is superfluous for me to spend a lot of time dealing with a list intended to prove something untrue that has been established as fact.

Roy said, "'Parousia,' a singular noun, has only one meaning..." That is false. A noun can also be a verb. He then sought to establish something with the word "the," as if this word must be applicable to only one event. It does not. Roy may think he is THE Roy Runyon, but I know another man with this same name. This affirmative argument is weak.

Roy wrote, “As Paul posits the revealing of the... (MOS) just prior to the DOTL.” Just prior? The text does not support this:

“...That ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord [DOTL] is just at hand;” (ASV).

Paul said the DOTL was NOT at hand. Roy says it was. Whom should we believe?

Roy wrote:

“Robert’s proposition changes the *timing* of the context, i.e., Paul said when he who was restraining was removed, the MOS would be revealed, and this would be *when* the 2nd coming would occur.”

First, I have repeatedly asked Roy who or what is the “restraining force,” but he has refused to answer. Is it because he has previously taught that the “restraining force” was the chief priest and now teaches he was the MOS? He asserts that when the restraining person was removed “the 2ndcoming would occur.” But that is not what the text says.

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming” (ESV).

Clearly it is some time after the restraining person is out of the way that the MOS, whom Christ will destroy when He comes, would be revealed—not immediately, as Roy opines.

Refutation of Roy’s reasons for why he thinks the MOS was alive when Paul wrote.

Roy wrote:

“The Thessalonian brethren knew who was restraining the MOS;”

Answer:

Okay, but who was it they “knew”? Was it a Roman emperor or the Jewish priest? It seems that my opponent does not want to eliminate a person that he could attribute to be the MOS. Evidently, he was too quick to eliminate the pope.

“The MOS could not have been 'being restrained' if he were not yet living;”

Answer:

The movement was developing—elders taking on more power than allowed by the Scriptures, etc.

“Paul said the MOS '*opposes*' (present tense) and '*exalts himself*,' (present tense).”

Answer:

It was prophecy of the character of popes to come.

“The **present tense** verb rendered '*exalts himself*,' is **singular**, therefore, Robert’s assertion that Paul is identifying an indefinite but centuries-long succession of men is specious and untenable;”

Answer:

This was the character of each of the men who would hold the office that Paul vividly described.

Roy took issue with Paul's saying there was some misunderstanding of his first letter regarding the DOTL. He uses 1 Thes. 5:1, pitting Paul against himself. First, there is no reason to conclude that ALL misunderstood Paul’s first letter. Certainly, some did, which called for a refutation of their false teaching. Second, in the first letter Paul spoke of JESUS’ teaching regarding His final coming—a different coming than the one about which He had just given signs so they would know when that coming would take place (Matthew 24).

Conclusion:

The reason for my insisting that this debate be limited in words and to the texts in the proposition should be obvious to all. Max King wrote a book on eschatology that was 2.5-3 inches thick. He, and those who have followed his teaching, apparently think that by overwhelming with words they can teach effectively. And it is also common for them to ridicule “futurists,” whom they regularly call “ignorant,” who hold to the sound teaching of the coming that is future, at which time the world will be destroyed (2 Pet. 3).

As Peter said about Paul, “**He speaks about this subject in all his letters. Some things in them are hard to understand**” (ISV). Therefore, I have endeavored to teach the truth in as few words as possible and to make Paul’s teaching regarding Christ’s future coming easy to understand. I explained the text of our proposition phrase by phrase, using both secular and evidence from the Scriptures to prove my points. I pointed out Paul’s prophetic statement that the falling away would come before the coming of Jesus, and I detailed how this evil model was “**already at work**” and how it would develop over the years to culminate into the corrupt organization that we know it to be. I used Paul’s words, to include his letter to Timothy, that fully describe the MOS associated with the apostasy and the development of the papacy.

Roy has failed to refute any of these facts, yet his failure is only because he is on the wrong side of the truth.

I have provided ample evidence to convince the unbiased reader that the “man of sin” and the organization which he controls is what Paul warned about. It was/is the only system that fits the demands of the passage under study. The “man of sin,” associated with this organization, has yet to be destroyed. This proves the *parousia* is future.



## Roy Runyon's Rebuttal to Robert's Reply

Robert's "that's-my-story-and-I'm-sticking-to-it" and, "it's-true-because-I-said-so" mindset is demonstrated to be impervious to all exegeses, logic, self-consistent reasoning, and common sense. I hoped Robert would've invested some time in studying the scriptural references I offered. His quick response proves otherwise, and, he complains that I was "overwhelming with words," though we each have equal word limits.

His 3rd paragraph exhibits incredible illogic, demonstrating he overlooked/ignored my specifically linking Paul's great apostasy with Jesus' 'falling-away' prediction of "*the love of the majority growing cold*," in His Olivet Discourse....in the portion which Robert correctly applies to AD 70. He chides me for pointing to the article (the), yet, he fails to offer you one keystroke of evidence for *another* great apostasy!

In his 5th paragraph, Robert writes, "Paul said the movement (apostasy) was already at work—not that it was already established. Roy says the MOS was present." This is a **blatantly false**, and such a misrepresentation violates proper debate protocol. I repeatedly said the MOS would be revealed, and I pointed out 2 Timothy 1:15, "demonstrating that the apostasy **had begun**," not "was established."

The hypocritical irony in Robert's comments is simply jaw-dropping. The aggregate of his 'evidence' comes from secular writers which he imposes on a couple of texts, while I offered nothing but contextual scripture, interpreted by scripture; and he has the audacity to accuse me of following Max King's writings.

John Lightfoot (1602—1675) wrote that "2 Thessalonians 2:2" (The Day of the Lord)...With many other passages of that nature...must be understood of Christ's coming in judgment and vengeance against that wicked nation..."

In 1850, Alpheus Crosby published his book entitled "*The Second Advent*"; in 1878, James Stuart Russell published "*The Parousia*," along with Israel P. Warren's 1884 work of the same title, and in 1900, William Urmy published a book entitled "*Christ Came Again*."

Max King wasn't born until 1930, so this puts his works over half a century after the latest of the works mentioned above; therefore, as Robert arbitrarily denigrates me by alleging I follow Max King's teachings, he unfortunately demonstrates his severe level of misinformation.

After quoting 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 which falsified Robert's assertion that they were confused regarding the DOTL, this irony is seen again as I'm accused of "pitting Paul against himself"; and yet, Robert fails to offer you one syllable where **Paul said** they were confused. He had already told them about the DOTL prior to writing the first epistle (2Th 2:5); says he doesn't need to write to them about it because they know

perfectly of the time and seasons, and then here (2:2:2), admonishes them to not get shook up and frightened if they received what looked like a letter from an apostle claiming that the DOTL **had already arrived**.

Notice again that Robert demonstrates his lack of study by his hasty response, in citing the ASV's "...as that the day of the Lord [DOTL] is just at hand"; then asserting, "Paul said the DOTL was NOT at hand. Roy says it was." The irony here is seen, not only in the fact that I already made this point, but Robert's misinterpretation has Paul contradicting James!

James said "*the parousia of the Lord is at hand*," using the same Greek term, *eggizō*, in the same Greek tense, which John and Jesus used to preach the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*. The perfect tense verb *enistēmi*, used exclusively by Paul, is *accurately* rendered as, "*hath arrived*," (YLT), "*has come*," (KJ3/ESV/NASB/LITV), "*is present*," (Darby/CLV/MLV). Translations aside, this linguistic fact is easily comprehended by the unbiased mind seeing that Paul twice uses this term *enistēmi* rendered "*things present*" contrasted with "*things to come*," (Rom 8:38; 1Co 3:22). It wasn't "Roy" who said the *parousia*-DOTL was at hand, it was Paul (1Th 4:15), James (5:7-9), Peter (1Pe 4:5-17; 2Pe 3:11), John (1Jn 2:17-3:2), and Jesus (Rev 22:6,7,12).

**Futurist** scholar **Adam Clarke**, commenting on **1 Timothy 4:3**, wrote, "These hypocritical priests pretending that a single life was much more favorable to devotion, and to the perfection of the Christian life. This sentiment was held by the **Essenes**, a religious sect among the Jews;"

Likewise, **Vincent** says, "The ascetic tendencies indicated by these prohibitions **developed earlier than these Epistles** among the **Essenes**, an ascetic Jewish brotherhood on the shores of the Dead Sea..."

**Robertson** says, "...Paul condemns the ascetic practices of the Gnostics. The **Essenes**, **Therapeutae** and other oriental sects forbade marriage."

Apparently, tunnel vision precludes Robert's acknowledging this "evidence," even from his **Futurist** scholars, which demonstrates his biased hermeneutics. The unquestionable "evidence" exists for Paul, in 1 Timothy 4, to not be referring to centuries-later-papal-Catholicism, but to **then-present** groups/practices. Robert's grasping-at-straws claim that I have "no real evidence, from the Bible or secular history, that supports his assertion that the MOS is not the succession of popes," is quashed.

Notice Peter's words: "*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets **from Samuel and those that follow after**, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days*," (Acts 3:22ff). Found here in Peter's application of

Moses' words, *is the language of succession*, i.e., a line of prophets, beginning with Moses and culminating in THE Prophet Who would "*seal up vision and prophecy*," (cf. Deu 18:15-19; Dan 9:24). This text, identifying a *succession of men* over several centuries, stands in stark contrast to **the language** of Paul who identified the MOS as then-living, then-sitting in the temple OF GOD, then-opposing/then-exalting himself, then-being-restrained by a then-living man.

Daniel posited the sealing up of "*vision and prophecy*" during the 70th week, which would be when the Abomination of Desolation (AoD) would occur; Jesus applied the AoD of "Daniel the prophet" (Mat 24:15) to when His disciples would see "Jerusalem surrounded by army camps," stating these would be "*the days when all things written shall be fulfilled*," (Luke 21:20-22). Both Daniel and Jesus posited the fulfillment of all prophecy in/by AD 70. Robert has prophecy still ongoing today. Robert is wrong! Robert admits the portions of the OD just cited applies to "the coming of Christ in judgment on Jerusalem..." Robert's Cognitive Dissonance prevents him from seeing his own YUGE self-contradiction.

Robert says, "We had an agreement to limit discussion to the texts in the proposition..." Well, no, we did not! I agreed to *handicap* myself by not using Daniel 7 nor 12. It was thoroughly discussed that, if Paul was quoting from an OT text, then that OT text/context must be understood. Paul said those afore-written things were for our learning (Rom 1:16); Paul told Timothy to study to rightly divide God's word (2Ti 2:15), and very late in Paul's ministry, he was still preaching the kingdom from "Moses and the prophets" (Acts 28:23), from which Lois and Eunice schooled Timothy from childhood (2Ti 1:5). Paul told Timothy to continue in those things which he had learned from childhood from "the holy scriptures" (2Ti 3:14f).

Clinging to his position forces Robert to ignore these "holy scriptures" from which Paul drew his eschatology (Acts 26:22-23); the very scriptures which foretold of Christ's second coming, and, which Timothy was to continue in so that he would be "*thoroughly furnished unto all good works*," (2Ti 3:16-17).

In his first Affirmative, third paragraph, Robert said, "In his first Thessalonian letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul wrote of the return of Christ"; thus, Robert opened the door for elaboration on the coming of Christ in Paul's first epistle. I demonstrated how Paul was quoting from Zechariah 14:5 in 1:3:13. Even some of Robert's Futurist scholars admit this fact such as, Alford, Vincent, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, McGarvey, TSK, Meyer, etc. After demonstrating the context of Zechariah 12-14 (which Robert totally ignored), I said, "Paul then returns to this OT context in chapters 4 & 5..." Commenting on 1 Thessalonians 3:13, Ellicott says, "The word might possibly be stretched to include the holy angels...but here we may more probably suppose that St. Paul is anticipating his teaching of 1 Thessalonians 4:14."

I demonstrated that in Paul's second epistle, he was quoting from Isaiah 66:15 (2:1:8), and Isaiah 2:10,19,21 (2:1:9). Again, some of Robert's Futurist scholars admit these facts such as Bengel, Vincent, Cambridge, etc. Robert's petulant "NUHH UHH" attitude toward these FUTURIST-ADMITTED-FACTS is very telling indeed!

Note that Robert offered *not one syllable* of lexical proof for his **wild**—OUTLANDISHLY-WILD—"a-noun-can-also-be-a-verb"-spitball-on-the-ceiling—**claim**.

Again, Robert offered *not one keystroke* of **scriptural** 'evidence' for "elders taking on more power than allowed by the Scriptures." Robert admits to the then-living restraining-man, but with an extraordinary verbal-gymnastic-feat says the MOS who 'opposes' (present tense) and 'exalts himself,' (present tense) is "prophecy of the character of popes to come"; thus, Robert elasticizes/**changes** Paul's PRESENT TENSE language into a three-full-centuries-FUTURE prophecy.

## Runyon's Rejoinder

During the ministry of the apostles and early evangelists, there were false apostles (2Co 11:13-15), who were actively writing/sending letters; else, Paul wouldn't admonish the Thessalonians against becoming disturbed upon receiving such a letter. Similar to these fraudulent apostles claiming the DOTL *had come*, we find Hymenaeus was proclaiming that the resurrection *was past already*. Since the DOTL and the resurrection go hand-in-hand, undoubtedly these men were working synergistically.

In Robert's **opening** paragraph of this debate, he casts aspersion, suggesting that preterists are guilty of the Hymenaeian heresy. Such a misapplication of 2 Timothy 2:17-18 demonstrates a nescient disregard for the then-current Judaeo-religious background. It's poor hermeneutics on Robert's part to assume that something in a particular text, posited as future, is still future to us. Paul said the resurrection of the just/unjust *was about to occur* (Acts 24:15, JST/YLT/BIBLEHUB INTERLINEAR/BLB/IGNT+/KJ3/MLV/LITV/CLT/APB+). Hymenaeus contradicted Paul by claiming it was past already; Robert also contradicts Paul by asserting a future-to-us fulfillment, when Paul said the resurrection *was about* to occur; and Peter, who wrote that God *is ready to judge the living and the dead*, and, *the end of all things is at hand* (1Pe 4:5-7); and James, who wrote that *the parousia/coming of the Lord is at hand* (Jas 5:7-9).

Robert argues that the great apostasy didn't occur until **after** AD 70, but admits it had already begun. I quoted Paul who said that all Asia had turned away from him, demonstrating the apostasy had already begun. Jesus predicted that "*the love of the majority shall grow cold*," in His OD, which Robert **admits** (of Mat 24:3-33) **was fulfilled** in/by AD 70; thus, Robert contradicts himself and the *scriptural evidence*, by his own admissions, in favor of scholars' uninspired opinions.

Since Paul's eschatology emanates from *Moses and the prophets* (Acts 26:22-23; 28:23), I demonstrated Christ's second coming of Paul's Thessalonian epistles to be taken from such OT prophecies as Isaiah 2&66, and Zechariah 12-14, which some of Robert's Futurist scholars admit. These scholars also admit there were groups such as the Essenes in the Judaeo landscape which were the *contemporary* focus of Paul's words to the young evangelist in 1 Timothy 4:1-4, thus refuting Robert's assertion of this text referring to Catholicism . Yet, Robert rejects all *scriptural* evidence, and, all "*scholarly evidence*" which disagrees with his presuppositions.

Robert admits the restraining-man and the MOS were Paul's contemporaries, but chides me for not speculating on "who" this restraining-man was saying, "Evidently, he was too quick to eliminate the pope," while he also says, "606 has long been understood as being the date of the first recognized pope."

Robert admits that Paul foretells Christ's second coming in his Thessalonian letters. I demonstrated, linguistically, "this coming" to be "the parousia" of Christ. Since

**“the parousia” is never plural**, and since Jesus said His parousia would occur in/by AD 70, which again, Robert **admits** the parousia-coming of the OD occurred in AD 70, then Robert eviscerates all his arguments by his own admissions.

## Waters' Rejoinder

This debate went about as I expected it would. Contrary to debate protocol, Roy appealed heavily to Old Testament prophecy and passages outside the context and scope of the debate, including several new ones in his last affirmative. He also quoted heavily from secular writings in his 2<sup>nd</sup> negative, after chiding me for simply mentioning that “it is the view of some of the most brilliant scholars who ever lived.”

Roy scolded me for not dealing with the Old Testament scriptures that he presented. I made it clear in the beginning that the scope of the debate was the texts noted in the proposition. What he did is comparable to what OSAS proponents do. When presented with clear scripture that is devastating to their teaching, they ignore it and resort to their standby passages that they THINK support their cherished doctrine.

Roy was not able to come up with a real apostasy—to use his words, “Paul’s great apostasy”—that fully fit the description of the “man of sin” (MOS), which I showed to be the pope. **There was/is no OTHER great apostasy.** Roy never replied to the observation that it would make no sense for God NOT to warn of what we KNOW to be the real apostasy, which we see with our own eyes, but instead gave detailed prophecy warning of something that was of little significance and would soon fade away into oblivion.

In my affirmative installments I used scripture and secular history to establish that the MOS would come BEFORE the coming of the Lord—a key point. It was future at that time, yet even though my opponent affirmed that it was “present” he accused me of falsely charging him on that. He quoted from me, “Roy says the MOS was present.” Then he wrote, “This is a **blatantly false**, and such a misrepresentation violates proper debate protocol.” A review will reveal that he used the word “present” 10 times in his effort to prove what he now denies.

At any rate, that the coming was FUTURE is evident once one sees that the “falling away” that was “**already at work**” (CEV), ultimately led by the succession or line of popes, is the MOS. Roy endeavored to prove the MOS was something else, yet the “falling away” to which he pointed was evidently **not** THE “great apostasy” because he could not establish that there was a “man” (person) who fully depicted Paul’s description.

I showed that ALL the clues Paul gave described the pope and the movement that developed. Yet Roy said, “He fails to offer you one keystone of evidence for *another* great apostasy!” The reader, having seen that I discussed the passages in the texts of the proposition, phrase by phrase, and presented evidence from the pens of Catholic writers that implicate the papacy, may think Roy’s frustration caused him to become delusional.

I have proven that the final coming of our Lord is future. This fact cannot be averted or altered by twisting Scripture.