



Old Testament Reading – Daniel 9:17-27

New Testament Reading – Revelation 13:1-9

The Arrival of the Antichrist “Preparing His Pathway” 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

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God’s Word warns of a world leader who will soon arrive, and be given control over the ten nations that were once part of the Roman Empire and eventually over the world through treaties and war.

- The Bible gives this coming world leader 33 names and titles, not to identify him as a person but to illustrate his attributes and his actions.
- His best-known name is “antichrist,” which should be understood as “pseudo-christ.” The world will love him and see him as a great leader and a man of peace.
- However, he will be Satan’s counterfeit christ; a lying, evil, vicious, bloodthirsty “beast”, who will deceive the people with his sensational powers.
- He will lead the world into war against Israel, but will be defeated when Jesus Christ comes again.
- He and the False Prophet will be the first two inhabitants of hell.

In a survey of 600 people, including youth, adults, pastors and seminary professors, Donald Holsinger, a layman with a deep desire to learn, discovered that **most people in the church today do not understand the basic, fundamental issues relative to biblical prophecy.**

- The majority of seminaries do not teach specific courses on biblical prophecy, so the majority of pastors have not studied it, therefore they do not understand it, therefore they do not preach it, and therefore, the people who are actively involved in church today do not have a working knowledge of biblical prophecy.
- What is even more concerning is that, according to a report by Pastor Michael Youseff, 85% of students at America's largest Evangelical Seminary, and 74% of the clergy in American churches no longer believe in the inerrancy of Holy Scriptures.
- Yet, 26.8% of the Bible is considered "prophecy" – not "foretelling" but "forthtelling" what God has ordained to occur in the future, fulfilling His plan for our redemption.
- Twenty-three of the 27 New Testament books mention the Lord's Second Coming, and over 50 times in the New Testament, the writers exhort their readers to "prepare" Jesus Christ's return to this earth.
- In 1 Timothy 4:1, 13, 15, 16, 2 Timothy 2:14, and Acts 20:30-31, Paul exhorts pastors, by his own example, to equip God's people with the truth of God's Word, so the people will not be taken in by false teachers.
- However, today's pastors' reluctance to preach biblical prophecy, and today's peoples' reluctance to hear, believe and act upon biblical prophecy only serve to validate the veracity of biblical prophecy.
- In 2 Timothy 4:1-4, and in Jude, the Bible refers to this ignorance of biblical prophecy as **"Apostasy"** – the great Falling Away – **preparing the pathway for the arrival of the Antichrist.**

Background of 2 Thessalonians:

- This church was only a few months old, yet Paul bragged on them because of their faith in God, their repentance from idols, their witness to others, and their willingness to endure severe persecution. (1 Thessalonians 1:6-10)
- Since Paul had written his first letter, persecution had increased. So, he penned a **second letter**, not coddling them in their suffering, but **comforting them with the promise of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**
 - **Chapter 1** – "I know you are suffering severe persecution – so am I – so did Jesus, it is to be expected by those who believe in Jesus, but He will take care of that when He comes again."
 - **Chapter 3** – "I know false teachers deceived you with a letter that I supposedly wrote, but I didn't. Read the 1st letter again, and correct that false teacher, in love."
 - **Chapter 2** – "No, you have not missed the rapture – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – because whether alive or dead when Jesus calls us to "come forth", every believer will be raptured. No, you are not living in the "Day of the Lord" – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 – God has not released His wrath upon the earth. He didn't save us to endure His wrath, but to deliver us from it. Besides, **'that day will not come unless the falling away and the man of sin is revealed.'**"

Notice the chronology of events:

- **First, the Apostasy** – turning away from the truth of God's Word and embracing Satan's lies.
- **Second, the Appearing of Antichrist** – he becomes the leader of the world and deceives the people of Israel for the first three years of the Tribulation.
- **Third, the Arrogance of Antichrist** – he enters the temple in Jerusalem and proclaims himself as God.

1. The Great Deception – Vs 3 – "Let no man deceive you by any means."

Satan is a liar, a deceiver who will use any method to achieve his goal to destroy the work and the workers of God. (John 10:10)

- Satan is called the "Angel of light" when he is the prince of darkness.

- His counterfeit ministers are called “Angel’s of light” when they are the purveyors of darkness.

Satan cannot destroy a true believer. (John 10:20) However, he can deceive the believer to distract him from the truth and defeat his testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

- In Matthew 24:4, and Mark 13:5, Jesus warned his hearers, **“See to it that no one misleads you.”** The word “mislead” means to be lead astray, to be diverted from the truth and into false doctrine.
- As the end of the church age draws near, the works of Satan and his counterfeit ministers will include many “signs and wonders” – “white magic miracles”.
- Many will be deceived, some will be led away into false doctrine, and some will even turn from the true faith and embrace the fables and false philosophies.
- According to a recent study, churches that employ any methods of the Charismatic Movement are more prone to this deception because of their emphasis on emotions and personal experience over biblical doctrine.
- What began in the Garden of Eden with Satan doubting God’s Word is manifested today in a lack of trust in the sufficiency of the Scriptures.
- Satan, who was at one time in charge of all the praise of heaven, is now using the medium of music to unite all the world’s religions under one banner.
- **This “turning from the truth” is called Apostasy.**

2. The Strong Delusion – Vs 11 –12 – “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Throughout the Scriptures, God urges people to accept the truth and remain faithful to the truth to not be led astray.

- However, when people deliberately reject Him and His truth, God hardens their hearts and deludes their minds until the day they can be cast into eternal damnation.
- But notice the steps of progression –
 - **First, there is apostasy** – the deliberate rejection of the truth and embracing the lie.
 - **Second, if that is not checked it leads to deception** – in essence, believing in the lie so strongly that it is accepted as the truth.
 - **Third, if that is not confessed and repented of, there comes a point where God sends them strong delusion** – He turns them over to a reprobate mind, and there is no way back.
- When one knows the truth of God’s Word, yet refuses to obey it, he becomes vulnerable to Satan’s deception.
- This is why Christians are urged to constantly grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord so they will not be so easily deceived by the emissaries of Satan.

3. The Deliverance of God’s people – Vs 16 –17 – “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

- The “comfort” and the “assurance” we need to face the future in faith and not in fear was contained in the grace we received when we were born again.
- All God asks us to do is to “trust” and “obey”, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus.

Biblical History – Big Picture

