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Antichrist Revealed, and Then the Rapture - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #121 ~
The apostle Paul had written one letter to the Thessalonian church, and much of that focused on the future, on details about the coming of Christ. But it wasn't long before Paul became very concerned about them, for he heard that many in this young church were alarmed and troubled. They received a letter, heard some message, or somehow got the impression that the day of the Lord had already started, which worried them, and made them wonder if they were even saved, and therefore, had missed the rapture.

Paul dearly loved these Christians and knew he needed to write another letter to clear up any confusion, to answer any questions they had. In 2 Thessalonians 1, he tells them that the rapture, and the relief that comes with it, would occur before God's retribution, before the day of the Lord, before God's punishment of unrepentant sinners. In 2

Thessalonians 2:1, Paul reminds them that at the coming of the Lord, all believers would be gathered to Him. Then in verse two, Paul referred to the day of the Lord.

But before we go any further, you need to see how the coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord relate to each other. First, let me define this word coming. It is a noun and means arrival and continuing presence, and in this case, the arrival and presence of the Lord. It is not referring to a simple, instantaneous event, but to a comprehensive whole, which includes many events directed by Christ. The 1st event to occur at His coming will be the rapture of the church, immediately followed by the 2nd event, the day of the Lord. I say immediately because of what Luke 17:29-30 says: *"On the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed."* What this tells us is that the day of the Lord starts on the same day as the rapture of the church. At the coming of Christ, the church is raptured, and after that, on that same day, the day of the Lord begins.

Now let's go back to 2 Thessalonians 2. In verse one Paul speaks of the coming of the Lord. In verse 2 he mentions the Day of the Lord. In verse 3 he tells us about two identifiable events that will occur before the day of the Lord, and also before the coming of the Lord. He says there's the apostasy, and that the man of lawlessness needs to be revealed. This word apostasy means rebellion, defiance or defection; and I believe part of this apostasy relates to the revealing of this lawless man, the Antichrist, which occurs at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, a seven-year time-frame. Daniel 9:27

Let me explain the connection between the apostasy and the revealing of the Antichrist. Sometime in the first half of Daniel's 70th week, the Jews will be permitted to build a temple and offer sacrifices to God, for which they will be very happy. Then along comes the most arrogant and evil man ever, the Antichrist, and in total defiance of God, he desecrates their temple. Verse 4 tells us that he *"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." Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15

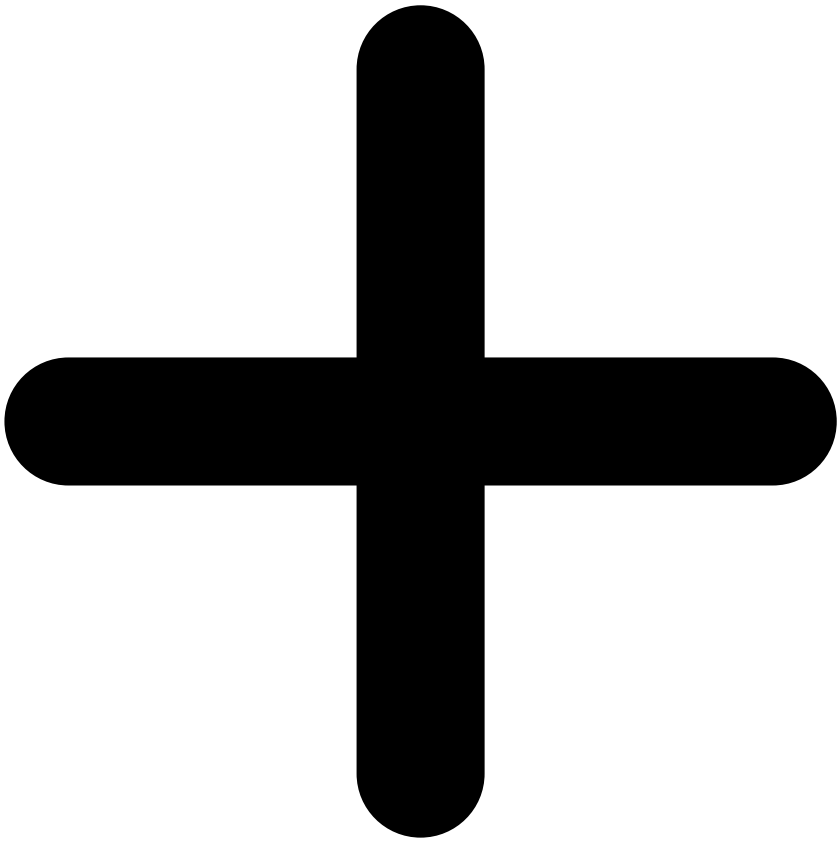
This shocking display of pride and power, along with other signs, will cause many Jews, and many so-called religious people around the world to be deceived, to defect, and to turn away from God (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). The result will be that most of them will begin to worship this lawless man, this beast, this Antichrist. (Revelation 13:3-17). What Paul is saying is that the apostasy and the revealing of the Antichrist will occur before the day of the Lord. These two events did not take place back then, and still have not taken place today, close to 2000 years later. In particular, we have not seen the Antichrist on earth, at least not yet. Therefore, we know that the day of the Lord has not yet started, and we know that the Lord has not yet come in the clouds and raptured the church, but He will, and it will not be long from now.

In the near future, the Antichrist will be revealed at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, and after that, at some unknown time to us, the coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord will begin. Since the rapture of the church is the first event to occur at the coming of the Lord, we know the rapture will take place sometime after the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, after the Antichrist is revealed, sometime during the last half of that 7-year period. This means Christians will be living on earth when the Antichrist is revealed, and is ruling over the world.

Let me go back to the first word in this passage. It is the word request and is translated as beg, plead or beseech. In verse 3, Paul says, *"Let no one in any way deceive you."* Paul, a concerned pastor, was strongly pleading with these young Christians, warning them not to be tricked, lied to, nor led astray by anyone, in any way. I have the same concern, that you know the truth about the end-times and the coming of Christ, and are not at all deceived, confused, or in error. God wants you to know about these events that will be taking place before the coming of the Lord, and also have a clear grasp as to where they fit in, that is,

understand the sequence of these end-time events. When you understand these things, you will realize that you may go through some short-lived tribulation brought on by the Antichrist, but you will not go through the eternal wrath brought on by God. This is very good news, for *“God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ… we will live together with Him.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

P.S. What I am talking about in this post relates to the sequence, the chronology of end-time events, something all good students and teachers of Bible prophecy need to understand. The best chapter that covers this subject is Matthew 24. I encourage you to read my article, entitled, Matthew 24 – The Most Important Prophecy Chapter in the Bible.



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