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The Antichrist Tries to Take Christ's Place - 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7



By Steven J. Hogan

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The Thessalonian church was being greatly persecuted. Then they heard some message or read some letter making them think the Lord Jesus had already returned, and that they had missed the rapture. Paul, as an apostle and pastor, heard they were troubled, and knew he had to clear up their confusion, their error, and so he writes another letter to them, 2 Thessalonians. In chapter 1, he tells them that the relief that comes with the rapture takes place before the day of the Lord, before God's wrath is poured out on this earth. In chapter 2, he tells them that two events must occur before the day of the Lord, and therefore, before the rapture of the church. First, there needs to be the apostasy, this defection of so-called religious and church people. Secondly, there needs to be the revealing of the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist. As we look back through history, we see that neither of these events have ever happened, but they will, and not long from now.

That's because we live in the end-times, which means this 2nd Thessalonian epistle is especially relevant to us. But it's not just relevant, it's essential that we understand it. I say this because many Christians believe no events need to occur, and no conditions need to be met before the coming of Christ and the rapture of the church. But that's not true, that's erroneous. Right here in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Paul tells us two events that need to take place before the rapture. Other prophecy passages state additional conditions and events that need to happen. Matthew 24:3-30, Luke 21:7-28, Revelation 6:1-17

God gives us these signs because He wants us to have a general idea when His Son is coming back to earth. It's true we don't know the exact day or hour of Christ's return, but God wants us to know many of the end-time events leading up to His return, as well as the sequence, the order of these events. We will *"see the day* (of Christ) *drawing near"* (Hebrews 10:25), and then *"see the Son of Man coming in a cloud..."* (Luke 21:27). Jesus Christ is coming like a thief in the night to unbelievers, but not to believers, not to us. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

Let's look at 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, which is about the man of lawlessness, known also as the Antichrist. What God wants us to know is that Christians will be alive on earth when the Antichrist is revealed. We may not want to hear this, but it is the truth. These verses make it clear that the Antichrist must be revealed before the day of the Lord, which means before the coming of the Lord, and therefore, before the rapture of the church and the gathering of all believers to Him. Matthew 24:31

The Antichrist, this most lawless, vile and devilish man to ever live, is described in great detail in the book of Daniel. He will be a strong and boastful speaker, extremely powerful, crushing and ruling other nations, and leading a ten-nation kingdom. He will be *"waging war with the saints,"* and arrogantly speaking out against them (Daniel 7:11, 19-26). He will be smart, shrewd, intimidating and destructive, and will *"even oppose the Prince of princes"* (Daniel 8:23-25). He will make a peace

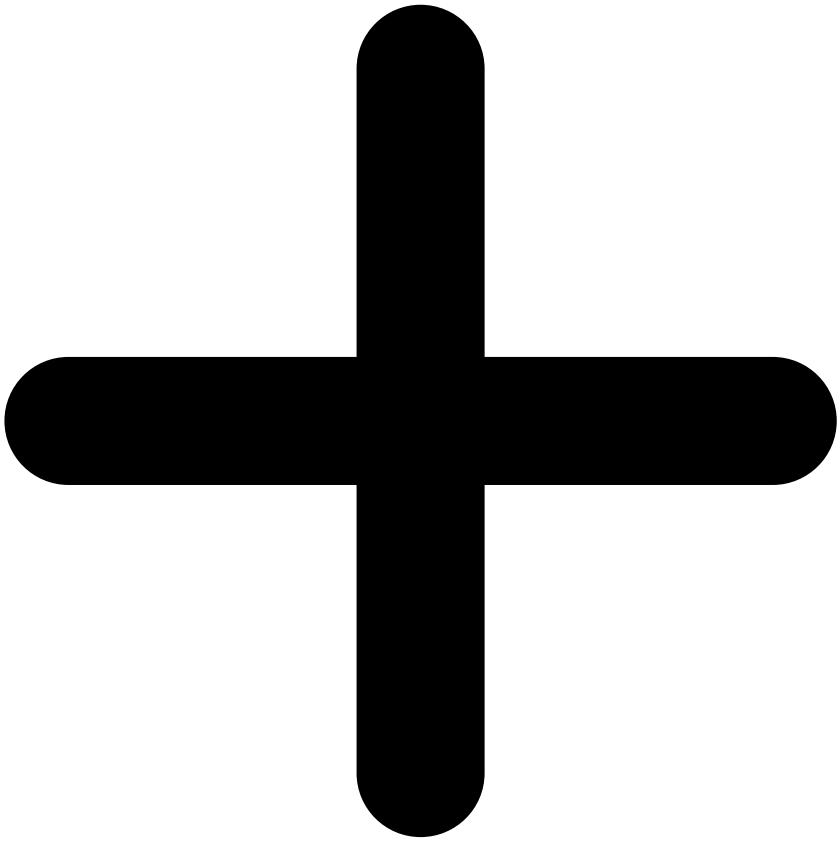
treaty with Israel, pretending to be her protector, but will then turn violently against her. Daniel 9:27

This most evil man will *"do as he pleases, and will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods"* (Daniel 11:36), which is just what 2 Thessalonian 2:3-5 tells us will happen. The time will be the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, and the place will be the temple in Jerusalem. During the first half of this week, this 7-year time-frame, this man of lawlessness grows in power and prominence. Seemingly unstoppable, he *"opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship."* He is strongly opposed to all religions, churches and God Himself, for he wants no one else in the world, but himself, to be worshiped. Revelation 13:3-8

Then *"he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."* This is the *"abomination of desolation,"* predicted by Daniel and confirmed by Jesus (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15). It is at this time, at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, that this *"man of lawlessness is revealed*," for then Christians and discerning Jews will know for certain that this devilish man is the Antichrist. He will be the greatest God-hater, Jew-hater, Christian-hater ever. *"He opened his mouth in blasphemies against God... It was also given to him to make war with the saints, and overcome them."* Revelation 13:7

It's the beginning of the 21st century, and this son of destruction is now restrained, is kept in check, for his time has not yet come. But his father, the devil, is not restrained, for since the sin of Adam and Eve, *"the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"* (1 John 5:19). In the near future, the restrainer, who I believe is Michael the archangel, will be taken out of the way, and then the Antichrist will be revealed – and we will know its him. (Daniel 12:1, Revelation 12:7-12). Thankfully, this Antichrist *"has only a short time,"* for *"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."* 2 Thessalonians 2:8

P.S. Here are two previous posts that go along with this one, and will help you further understand the future that God has planned for our world: That Evil Antichrist, and His Short Rule on Earth and The Timing of the Rapture.



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