



Go for God!

“JESUS CHRIST vs. Antichrist!”

2 Thessalonians Chapter 2

~ **There are three themes in this chapter:**

- **Theme #1 – (v1-2) RAPTURE DELIVERANCE!**
- **Theme #2 – (v3-12) DEVIL’S DECEPTION!**
- **Theme #3 – (v13-17) OUR CHRISTIAN DESTINATION!**

> Theme #1 – (v1-2) RAPTURE DELIVERANCE!

- **What is the “Day of Christ”?** – According to the Unger’s Bible Dictionary, “This is the period connected with reward and blessing of saints at the coming of Christ for His own (commonly called “the rapture”; ref. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50-54). The expression occurs in 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2 the KJV has the day of Christ incorrectly for the Day of the Lord. The day of Christ is not the Day of the Lord. The latter is connected with earth judgments (Rev. 4:1-19, 16), which will come after the out-taking of the church, the Body of Christ, and its glorification and judgment for works at the judgment seat of Christ. The Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; Rev. 19:11-21) cannot occur until after the church is completed (2 Thess 2:2-12).”

- Paul’s previous letter to the Thessalonians specifically explained that **the church would not go through the wrath to come, that is, the seven-year tribulation**, also known as the “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jeremiah 30:7) and “*the day of the Lord.*”

- **Observe:**

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 - *For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers US from the wrath to come.*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 - *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon THEM, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And THEY shall not escape. But YOU, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake YOU as a thief.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 - *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

> **Theme #2 – (v3-12) DEVIL’S DECEPTION!**

(v3) Paul warns the believer about present “deceivers” and a “*falling away*” in the last days; the Greek word for “*falling away*” is *apostasia*, which is an *apostasy, meaning a defection from truth, a defiance, a rebellion, or a departure against or from the faith.* As to the forms of apostasy, there are two main types:

(1) A falling away from key and **true doctrines of the Bible** into heretical teachings that proclaim to be ‘the real’ Christian doctrine.

(2) Apostates will practice **a full renunciation of the Christian faith, which results in a full abandonment of Christ.**

- Bible scholar and teacher John Walvoord writes, “The development of apostasy will be in three stages:

(1) **The doctrinal and moral departure** in the church prior to the rapture, i.e. during the last days of the true church on earth.

(2) **The apostasy in the professing church after the true church is raptured,** i.e., in the period immediately following the rapture.

(3) The final apostasy in which the professing church as such will be destroyed and the worship of the beast, the world ruler, as the human representative of Satan will be inaugurated (Mt. 24:5; Rev. 13:4-8; 17:16-18).”

- Paul Enns author of the Moody Book of Theology writes, “Jude describes the apostates as “ungodly” and those who use God’s grace as license to commit unrighteous acts. Beginning with “ungodly,” throughout his letter Jude describes eighteen unflattering traits of apostates so his readers can more easily identify them.

- Jude says the apostates **are ungodly (vs.4), morally perverted (vs. 4), denying Christ (vs. 4), ones who defile the flesh (vs. 8), rebellious (vs. 8), people who revile angels (vs. 8), who are ignorant about God (vs. 8), those who proclaim false visions (vs. 10), grumblers (vs. 16), fault finders (vs. 16), self-satisfying (vs. 16), people who use arrogant words and false flattery (vs 16), mockers of God (vs. 18), those who cause divisions (vs. 19), worldly minded (vs. 19), and finally (and not surprisingly), devoid of the Spirit/unsaved (vs. 19).**

- Jude says apostates “*deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*” How do apostates do this? Paul tells us in his letter to Titus: “*To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by*

their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:15-16, emphasis added). Through their unrighteous behavior, the apostates show their true selves.

- Unlike an apostate, one who is a true believer is someone who has been delivered from sin to righteousness in Christ. With Paul, they ask the apostates who promote licentious behavior: *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"* (Romans 6:1-2).

- Apostates' false teaching also shows their true nature - Peter says in 2 Peter 2:1-3 - *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*

- Another aspect of true believers is that they have been delivered out of spiritual darkness into light (Ephesians 5:8) and therefore will not deny core truths of Scripture like Arius did with the divinity of Jesus. Ultimately, the sign of an apostate is they eventually fall away and depart from the truth of God's Word and His righteousness. The apostle John signifies this as a mark of a false believer: *They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.* (1 John 2:19).

- For example Paul excoriates two former believers, one is HYMENAEUS, an early Christian who denied the faith (1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 2:16-17). His message was heretical because he claimed the resurrection of the dead was already past. His *"profane and vain babblings...spread like cancer"* and destroyed the faith of believers. Along with HYMENAEUS is ALEXANDER, these two heretical teachers at Ephesus were "delivered to Satan" (1 Tim 1:19-20) by Paul.

- Kenneth Wuest writes, "Thus, in the name "Jesus" there is contained the doctrines of the deity, humanity and vicarious atonement of Person who bears that name. Only Jehovah could offer a sacrifice which would satisfy the demands of His holy law which the human race broke. But that sacrifice had to include within itself human nature without its sin, for deity in itself could not die, and deity acting as Priest for the sinner must partake of the nature of the individual on whose behalf he officiates." In these last days within much of the global apostate church we find the doctrine of "modernism" which denies that the Person called Jesus was neither God nor man, and that on the Cross He did not offer atonement for sin. Present day Modernism denies the

deity of Jesus of Nazareth and the substitutionary atonement He offered on the Cross, while subscribing to His humanity.

(v4-10) Let's discover the RESTRAINER and the ANTICHRIST! -

- The RESTRAINER is the HOLY SPIRIT working through the BODY OF CHRIST, whereas all born-again believers are being salt and light since "Pentecost" (Acts Ch. 2) up until the RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 3:7-13).

- When the rapture takes place then comes the fulness of the LAWLESS ONE, "He (Holy Spirit) who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way."

- What is the work of the HOLY SPIRIT during the 7 YEARS TRIBULATION?

The HOLY SPIRIT will continue to save souls, in Revelation 7 we see the 144,000 Jews preaching the gospel and in Revelation 20:4 we read - *Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.*

- THE LAST DAYS ANTICHRIST IS COMING! – What does the Bible say about the ANTICHRIST:

- The antichrist is a false prophet and evil being who will set himself up against Christ and the people of God in the last days before the SECOND COMING. The term is used only in the writings of John in the New Testament. It refers to one who stands in opposition to all that Jesus Christ represents (1 John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 7). John wrote that several antichrists existed already in his day, false teachers who denied the deity and the incarnation of Christ, but that the supreme Antichrist of history would appear at some future time.

- The Antichrist's primary work is deception, which also characterizes SATAN in his attempts to undermine the work of God in the world. Satan's deception began in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3) and will continue until the end of time. The DRAGON (or serpent) of Revelation Ch. 12 is Satan, the Serpent mentioned in Genesis Ch. 3. Thus, the thread of Satan's deceptive work may be traced from Genesis through Revelation. That work reaches its climax in the Antichrist, who receives his authority and power from the dragon, Satan (Rev 13:4).

- The work of Satan through the Antichrist is clearly rooted in the prophecies of Daniel. Daniel spoke of a dreadful beast with ten horns and one little horn (Dan 7:7-8). The Ancient of Days (Jesus) will kill the beast (Antichrist) and throw it in the fire (Dan 7:11). Then, according to Daniel, one like the *Son of Man* (Jesus) will receive the everlasting kingdom (Dan 7:13-14).

- The Antichrist will be the sum total of the beasts referred to in Daniel Ch. 7 (Rev 13:1-4). He will speak arrogant, boastful words; and he will be aided by a FALSE PROPHET, who will make the entire earth worship him (Rev

13:11-12) and receive his mark (Rev 13:16-17). The number of the beast, says John, is 666, a mysterious code name.

- Those who worship the Antichrist will experience certain doom through the wrath of God (Revelation 14:9-11 - *Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."*).

- The Antichrist makes war against Christ and His army, but he is captured and is "*cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone*" (Rev 19:20). He is later joined by the **DEVIL**; together they "*will be tormented day and night forever and ever*" (Rev 20:10). **The devil, the BEAST (Antichrist), and the false prophet form an unholy trinity, counterfeiting Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. After much wickedness and suffering has been loosed against Christ and His people, the satanic rebellion will be crushed by the power of God.**

- Although the apostle Paul does not use the term Antichrist, he surely had the Antichrist in mind when he wrote of the great apostasy, or falling away, that would occur before the return of Christ (2 Thess 2:1-12). The Antichrist is also called the **LAWLESS ONE** (v. 9) who, empowered and inspired by Satan, will lead the final rebellion against God (v. 3, NEB), but will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. Paul urges believers to stand firm in the faith and not be deceived by the Antichrist who will display "*all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders*" (2 Thess 2:9).

- **The main reason the Bible discusses the Antichrist is not to encourage idle speculation, but to warn believers not to be misled by his deceit (Matt 24:4-5, 23-24).** The times when the Antichrist will appear will be very hard for the faithful. They need to be prepared with special instructions on how to deal with this unsettling event. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

- **Observe three key elements of the antichrist:**

(1) The **PERSUASION** of the antichrist spirit – 1 John 2:18-29; 4:1-4; 1 Tim. 4:1;

2 Tim. 3:1-5

(2) The **POWER** of the antichrist – 2 Thess. 2:9-10

(3) The **PUNISHMENT** of the antichrist and those who follow him – Rev. 19:11-21.

(v11-12) Wiersbe explains well regarding "*God will send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie,*" - **It is important to note that these people did have opportunity to believe and be saved.** God has no delight in judging the lost (Ezek 33:11). God is "*not willing that any should perish, but that all*

should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). These people will be judged and will suffer forever because they would not receive and believe the truth. In fact, their hearts will be so evil that they will not even have any love for the truth. Those who love lies and make lies will be excluded from the heavenly city (Rev 22:15) and sent to the lake of fire. In this paragraph, Paul taught a sobering truth: a person can so resist the truth that he finally becomes deluded and has to believe a lie. There can be no neutral ground: either we believe the truth or we believe a lie. To reject the truth means to receive the lie. Does this mean that God is to blame for a man's rejection of Christ? No more than God was to blame for Pharaoh's spiritual condition when Moses was bringing the plagues on Egypt. Pharaoh heard God's Word and saw God's wonders, yet he refused to bow to God's will. Pharaoh occasionally relented and gave lip service to God's will; but he always resisted in the end and refused to obey God. He hardened his heart so that he could not believe the truth, and this led to God's final judgment of the land of Egypt.

> Theme #3 – (v13-17) OUR CHRISTIAN DESTINATION!

- Our destination is GLORY, HEAVEN, to be with our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Every true believer reveals his or her SALVATION through SANCTIFICATION by the SPIRIT and BELIEF in the TRUTH according to the GOSPEL!