

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 1

Introduction To Eschatology

Eschatology is the study of the end times.

Eskhatos: Last *ology*: Study. Therefore, “The study of the last things.”

For these lessons, the terms *eschatology*, *end times*, and *Bible prophecy* will be used synonymously.

Eschatology is, for many, the most exciting topic in the Bible because it deals with future events, future judgments, and the conclusion of life on earth, as we know it. However, one massive word of caution must be given concerning the study of eschatology: the events prophesied have not yet come to pass and the imagery shown to the prophets of old concerned a future time, causing the interpretation of some of the scriptures concerning end time events to be a bit fuzzy. Even many of the sub-topics of eschatology are still open for interpretation.

WHY BOTHER TO STUDY IT?

The study of eschatology is critical in order to understand the season in which we are living. If we understand this season of time, we will know more accurately what to do.

- **And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; . . .** **1 Chronicles 12:32a**

We are living in the last days and need to have an understanding of these times.

Many students and scholars of the Word, for one reason or another, look down upon Bible prophecy. However, Paul told Timothy, “**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This includes the scriptures of prophecy and end time events. We must have, at the least, a rudimentary understanding of biblical prophecy to begin to be somewhat perfected in the things of God.

Furthermore, 17 books of the Bible deal with prophecy. That is one-fourth of the Bible. These books are Isaiah through Malachi in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament. If one-quarter of the Bible is dedicated to the prediction of future events, we would do well to familiarize ourselves with these scriptures.

Another reason to study eschatology: Paul taught it. In reference to certain eschatological events he wrote, “**Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**” (2 Thessalonians 2:5). If Paul emphasized it, we should at least look at it.



SAILING THROUGH TIME

Eschatology can be summed up in one little maxim: *End time prophecy is like sailing on a ship, your wake gives you a definite knowledge of where you come from but only a general idea of where you are going.*

The wake represents fulfilled scriptures, which allow for the Bible student to easily connect the dots of God's plan, but only when looking backwards. However, fulfilled scriptures only somewhat point you in the direction you are headed. You have no real idea how the other scriptures will possibly be fulfilled; you only know they will be.

EXAMPLE OF THE WAKE EFFECT

The coming of Jesus was prophesied for many generations. Many things were prophesied about Him, some almost contradictory. How all of these scriptures would be fulfilled would be impossible to predict, but God made sure they were all fulfilled. Consider the following:

- Jesus would be from Bethlehem. **And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel (Matthew 2:6 quoting Micah 5:2).**
- Jesus would be from Nazareth. **He would be called a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23).**
- Jesus would be from Egypt. **Out of Egypt have I called my son (Hosea 11:1).**

How could one Savior possibly fulfill these three requirements? If you were living before the days of Jesus Christ, looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, you may have fumbled for an interpretation or an explanation for these verses, or you may have even called these scriptures contradictory. However, looking back at the *wake* of fulfilled prophecy, all you can say is, "Ahhhhh, that makes sense."

Because of this so-called *wake effect* (that the author has loosely dubbed himself), eschatology must be walked out carefully and cautiously. Some events can be known for sure; others must be only loosely interpreted.

We may also use the example of natural vision: Things further away are poorly seen and out of focus. The closer we get to these foretold events, the more they will come into focus.

ESCHATOLOGY: A STUDY OF THE CULMINATION OF THE ENTIRE BIBLE

Eschatology has been deemed a daunting, challenging, and confusing study because it encompasses almost the entire Bible and it deals with the conclusion of mankind. For this reason, any good Bible prophecy student must have a decent understanding of many of the major books of the Bible.

Also critical to understanding Bible prophecy is the fact that all prophecy, with the exception of the rapture, revolves around God keeping His promises to Israel. Bible prophecy begins with Israel, was delivered unto Israel, and will conclude with Israel.



ESCHATOLOGY: A HOPE-FILLED STUDY

Dr. Hilton Sutton said, “The Bible is designed to give us hope; therefore, even the study of Eschatology should build hope in our life.”

Eschatology should not put fear in you. **God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, love, and a disciplined [mind] (2 Timothy 1:7 NASB).** The Word of God has been given to build faith, not fear. **Do not allow the study of Bible prophecy to scare you.** It is true, many bad things will happen in the end, but not to those who walk uprightly before their God.

- **For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,** **1 Thessalonians 5:9**

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 2

The Hub Of Bible Prophecy: Dispensations And Daniel's 70th Week

Eschatology begins with an understanding of the doctrine of dispensationalism. Without this critical understanding, you will not be able to put together a proper timeline of end time events.

Dispensationalism is the system of historical progression, as revealed in the Bible, consisting of a system of stages (or dispensations) in God's self-revelation and plan of salvation.

The Bible can be broken down into seven dispensations of time. These breakdowns are based on God revealing Himself to man and how He is interacting with man. God never changes, but how He has dealt with man has changed.

THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

(For a more thorough discussion on dispensations, see the PodSchool lesson: *How to Study the Bible, Lesson 2-Dispensationalism.*)

1. **Innocence (Genesis 1:1-3:21):** *From the creation to the fall of man.* We don't know how long this period lasted.
2. **Conscience (Genesis 3:22-7:23):** *1,656 years, from the fall of man to the flood.* Man became aware of his nakedness and sinfulness.
3. **Human Government (Genesis 8:20-11:9):** *429 years, from the flood to Abraham.* As the earth repopulates, cities and communities develop along with governments and societies.
4. **Promise (Genesis 11:9-Exodus 19):** *430 years, from Abraham to the giving of the Law.* God called a man named Abram out of a city named Ur to follow after Him. He promises to make Abram the father of many nations and changes his name to Abraham.
5. **Law (Exodus 20-Gospels):** *1,524 years, from the giving of the Law until the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Also known as the time of Israel. This is the time where God dealt with mankind through His chosen people, Israel, and through the law of Moses. This dispensation had a predetermined length of time.
6. **Grace/Church Age (Acts 1-Current Day):** *2,000+ years, from the Resurrection until the Rapture.* We are currently in the Church Age, commissioned to go into all the world and preach the Gospel of Salvation to every creature. Under this dispensation, God is dealing with mankind through His chosen people, the Church, and through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
7. **Millennial Kingdom/Reign of Christ:** *1,000 years, the 1,000-year reign of Christ.* This Millennial Kingdom is Christ's Kingdom.

DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS

Almost all Bible prophecy revolves around the Jewish people and Jerusalem: . . . **to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (Romans 9:4)**. We are part of the Gentile age and have merely been inserted into the timeline of Bible prophecy, having obtained salvation through Jesus Christ, because the Jews rejected Him. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that God would speak to an Israelite about the end of time and show that Israelite how things will unfold. Such is the case with the prophet Daniel.

Most Bible prophecy scholars call Daniel's 70 Weeks "the Hub of Bible Prophecy." Understanding Daniel's 70 weeks is important to understanding Bible chronology and to properly interpret many other scriptures. For this reason, we must study it very thoroughly.

- **Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**

Daniel 9:24

- 70 weeks (Hebrew: *shabuwa*), or 70 periods of seven (can be days or years). Here it is 70 periods of 7 years, or 490 years total (360 days in a Jewish year).
- Determined upon the Jews and Jerusalem. Generally speaking, all prophecy revolves around the seed of Abraham (the Israelites) and the Promised Land.
- God revealed He would accomplish several things in this time frame:
 - Stop rebellion
 - Make an end to sins
 - Atone for sins
 - Bring in everlasting righteousness
 - Confirm the vision being revealed
 - Re-consecrate the Holy of Holies

Note: These things were shown to Daniel as he sought God about the end of Israel's captivity and punishment. God not only said their punishment was over, but that He had a bright and glorious future for them—Jesus the Christ was coming!!

THE TIMELINE OF THE 490 YEARS

The next three verses give us a very specific breakdown of what would transpire over those 490 years.

- **Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.** **Daniel 9:25**

In this verse we are given two sets of time; both sets are subdivisions of the 70 weeks. The first is 7 weeks, or as previously stated, 7 sets of 7 or 49 years. The second period of time is 62 weeks or 434 years.

- From the time the command to rebuild Jerusalem was given until its completion was 49 years.
 - This commandment concerns the restoration of the city and its wall. This commandment came to Nehemiah in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, 445 B.C. (**Nehemiah 2**).
 - If we add 69 weeks or 476 (solar) years to the date of Artaxerxes' edict to rebuild Jerusalem (445 B.C.), we will find that Daniel's 69th week ends precisely on Palm Sunday, 32 A.D.
 - From the time of the completion of Jerusalem until the crucifixion of the Messiah was prophesied to be 434 years. The same week He rode into Jerusalem as their prince and king, they crucified Him.
- **After the sixty-two sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off [put to death] and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. Daniel 9:26 NIV**

This verse reaffirms the proper timeline: Jesus will be cut off (crucified) 62 periods of sevens (434 years) after Jerusalem was restored.

The second part of this verse predicts the coming antichrist, called "the prince (ruler) that shall come." This verse is also a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans. The Romans were Gentiles, heathen people of "the prince that shall come," also foretold by Jesus in **Matthew 24:2** and **Luke 21:6**. The antichrist will be covered more in future lessons as will the destruction of Jerusalem.

WE'RE MISSING A WEEK

Daniel 9:25 speaks of two sets of time, 7 weeks and 62 weeks. Added together, we get only 69 weeks. This missing week is what is called Daniel's 70th week. This 70th week has not been fulfilled yet. In fact, it has yet to happen. **Daniel 9:27** discusses this last week:

- **He [the prince that is to come, the antichrist] will confirm a covenant with many for one seven [group of sevens, our missing week]: In the middle of the seven he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. Daniel 9:27 NIV**

Jesus Christ called this last week the Tribulation (**Matthew 24:29**). It has not yet occurred. When the Church was born, what is referred to by some as "Jewish Time" stopped and the Church was inserted into time. In essence, Daniel's 70 weeks can be referred to as Jewish



time. Currently, the Church is how God moves in the earth. Before the Church Age, God moved through the nation of Israel. Israel has been put on hold and the Church has been activated. At the Rapture, the Church will be taken out of the earth, the LORD will reactivate Jewish time, and Daniel's last week of time will play out.

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 3

The Mystery Of The Church: Its Inclusion And Conclusion

Part 1

We have learned that God reveals Himself and works His will through dispensations. The study of end times really only focuses on three dispensations: Law, Church/Grace, and Millennial Reign. Let us look a little closer at the Church Age to see how it ties into Daniel's 70 weeks.

THE DISPENSATION OF MYSTERY

Theologians refer to the Church Age as the Dispensation of Grace or the Dispensation of Mystery. We are currently in this dispensation. It is referred to as the Dispensation of Grace because God reveals Himself to us and deals with us through grace (grace and truth came by Jesus Christ—**John 1:17**). Under the Dispensation of Law, God revealed Himself and dealt with mankind through the Mosaic Law.

Daniel's 70 Weeks (equaling 490 years) have not come to pass because the Church was inserted after Jesus was crucified (Messiah shall be cut off—**Daniel 9:26**) and Daniel's last week was put on hold. The Church and its reign were a mystery hidden from all but God.

- **And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:**
Ephesians 3:9

The "fellowship of the mystery" is speaking of the Church Age. This is the age wherein we have fellowship with God the Father through the LORD Jesus Christ. This opportunity and this dispensation were hidden from everyone from the beginning of the world.

- **Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. ¹²Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. **1 Peter 1:10-12****

This age is also called the Dispensation of Mystery because its existence was a mystery to the Old Testament believers and prophets. They could not see the Church Age coming. Not even the angels knew it was coming.

In the Old Testament, angels often taught men (**Judges 13:3-5; Daniel 9:21-27, 10:19-21, 11, 12; Zechariah 1:19-21, 3:6-10, 4:1-14**). They are not able to do so in the New

Testament due to their ignorance on the subject of salvation. In the Church Age, angels direct (**Acts 8:26, 10:3-6**), deliver (**Acts 5:19-20, 12:7-11**), serve (**Matthew 4:11; Hebrews 1:14**), smite (**Acts 12:23**), and comfort (**Acts 27:23-24**). However, during the Tribulation, angels will be given the gospel to preach (**Revelation 14:6**).

- **Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; ²⁶Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ²⁷To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:
Colossians 1:25-27**

This mystery of the Church Age revolves around the very fact that we not only get to fellowship with God, but He actually lives in us. The Church Age is made unique by the indwelling of God in His believers. No previous age or generation could see the Church Age coming. How could one begin to imagine that the Eternal god could possibly indwell a human being.

- **When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁷And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.
Acts 1:6-7**

Even the apostles, on the day of Jesus' ascension, knew nothing about the Church Age. It was still a mystery. They were looking for the Millennial Reign to start then. There are still times and seasons we are not able to know because the Father has put them in His own power.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Jesus introduced a peculiar term to His Jewish followers in the *Temple Discourse*—*The times of the Gentiles*.

- **And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times (*kairos*) of the Gentiles be fulfilled.
Luke 21:24**

Imagine being a Jewish follower of Jesus of Nazareth, believing He is the Messiah that has come to redeem and deliver Israel, establishing an everlasting kingdom in Israel; only to hear Him speak of the Gentiles trampling underfoot the holy city, and not just once, but for a whole season of time. *Kairos* time indicates an appointed measure of time. We are living in the time of the Gentiles.

In another place, Jesus did hint at salvation being extended to the Gentiles; something the Jews would have found anathema.

- **And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.** John 10:16

Jesus knew what He was doing. He knew about the Church age. He knew all nations must be given the chance to receive His salvation.

- **And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.** Matthew 12:21
- **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.** Acts 1:8

Isaiah even prophesied as much:

- **And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.** Isaiah 11:10
- **...he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.** Isaiah 42:1c
- **The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts [*eunuchs and foreigners in verses 3-7*] of Israel saith Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.** Isaiah 56:8

For all the foretelling and prophecy, the engrafting of the Gentiles was still a mystery to be revealed.

- **Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: ¹⁰That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him;** Ephesians 1:10-11
- **And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: [*the Church has been interjected here, between Messiah being cut off and the prince of the world destroying the Temple*] and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.** Daniel 9:26

Even Daniel's core prophecy could not see the Church Age. This is because God was only dealing with him about "**thy people and thy holy city.**" Daniel 9:26 jumps from



Jesus' crucifixion to the antichrist's reign and skips over 2000 plus years of the Church Age.

GOD'S TIME CLOCKS

When the Church was born on the day of Pentecost, Jewish time stopped, and the Dispensation of Grace began. Pentecost was a Jewish holiday celebrating the feast of harvest. It was celebrated annually from **Exodus 20** through **Acts 1** (approximately 1400 years). However, the annual celebration of Pentecost that occurred in **Acts 2** is deemed the time "Pentecost was fully come" (*fulfilled*). The outpouring of the Holy Ghost on those early believers was the fulfilling of the feast. This was the last event on the Jewish clock before time stopped at the end of the 69th week. The Church was born, and Church time began. Jewish time was put on hold.

When the Church is taken out of the earth in the Rapture, Jewish time will resume and Daniel's last week of time (seven years) will play out. That period of time is also called "Jacob's Trouble" (**Jeremiah 30:7**). Alas, we are not Jacob. We are the Church, and we will not be here. Praise God!!!

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 4

The Mystery Of The Church: Its Inclusion And Conclusion

Part 2

We have seen how the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost stopped God's time clock for the nation of Israel. The Church was birthed and Daniel's 70th week was put on hold until the Times of the Gentiles could be fulfilled. Remember, the Church Age was a mystery hidden from everyone. Jesus even skipped over it in His eschatological sermons in the Gospels.

- *The Olivet Discourse* in **Matthew 24:3-51** describes the signs leading up to the Temple's destruction and the skips over the Church Age to discuss the Abomination of Desolation. (The Church Age would be inserted in between verses 14 and 15).
- *The Olivet Discourse* as recorded in **Mark 13:3-37** describes the signs leading up to the Temple's destruction and the skips over the Church Age to discuss the Abomination of Desolation. (The Church Age would be inserted in between verses 10 and 14).
- The Temple Discourse in **Luke 21:5-38** focuses almost entirely on the events leading up to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Luke's record also skips over the Church Age, omits the Abomination Desolation, but describes to the events of Fifth Seal of the Tribulation (cf. **Luke 21:25, Revelation 6:12**). Jesus alluded to the Church Age in **Luke 21:24** when He prophesied about the "Times of the Gentiles."

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Biblically, there are only three categories of humans on earth: Jew, Gentile, and Saint (born-again Christian). Until the Day of Pentecost, God dealt with mankind through the Jews. However, after the Jewish nation rejected their Messiah, God broke off the Jews and began engrafting the Gentiles. Two thousand years later, the Church is still predominantly made up of Gentile converts. This is known as the "Times of the Gentiles" (**Luke 21:24**). Let us look at how the Gentiles have become God's people.

- **For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: . . . ¹⁷And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and the fatness of the olive tree; ¹⁸Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. ¹⁹Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. ²⁰Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: ²¹For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. ²²Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. ²³And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.**

24For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Romans 11:13, 17-25

Paul reveals in this passage that part of the reason Israel has been blinded to the reality of Jesus Christ is so the Gentiles could come to the saving knowledge of Him. The Jews were broken off because of doubt and by doing so, they have made room for the Gentiles to, by faith alone, be grafted into Jesus Christ. In essence, God the Father is allowing the Jews to be blinded (**Romans 11:7**) until the “fulness of the Gentiles” can come in.

- **As he saith also in Osee (Hosea), I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.** Romans 9:25-26

God spent one dispensation building a relationship with Israel (The Dispensation of the Law). Now He is spending one dispensation working to build a relationship with Gentiles (The Dispensation of Grace). We have now become His people.

- **And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.** 1 Timothy 3:16

The mystery of godliness includes the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles; and not just preached, but also believed on!! This is another reference to the Church Age being a mystery hidden from Israel but benefiting the Gentiles.

- **But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; . . . 10Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.**
1 Peter 2:9a, 10

Here, Peter quotes a promise God made to Israel in **Exodus 19:5-6**. At the time Israel was God’s people; however, their rejection of the Messiah caused God to move on to a people who were not a people (Gentiles) and caused them to be His people (Christians). He now extends this Old Testament promise to us.

- **And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.** Luke 21:24

**(PRE-TRIB VIEW)
THE RAPTURE WILL STOP/START TIME**

Remember, Daniel's 70 weeks are the skeletal framework upon which we are building our eschatological timeline and we are still missing the 70th week of time. The Rapture is the catching away of the saints of God, by the LORD Jesus, to be with Him in the air.

- **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: ¹⁷Then 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. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17****

"Caught up together": Greek- *harpazo*: *to catch, to snatch, to lead something away.*

Once the church is taken away, the Times of the Gentiles will be concluded and Jewish time will resume again. It is necessary for the Church to be removed out of the earth so the antichrist may rise to power.

- **... and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ⁵Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? ⁶And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. ⁷For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. **2 Thessalonians 2:3b-7****

The Church is the "he" who withholds the antichrist from manifesting. And the Church is the "he" who will soon be taken out of the way. The "he" cannot be the Holy Spirit for He will still be here during the Tribulation, empowering the two witnesses and the 144,000 Jewish witnesses and drawing people to Jesus. The "he" is the body of Christ—the Church.

The Rapture of the Church will accomplish several things:

1. The Rapture allows God to gather all of His children to Himself at once.
2. It will allow the righteous dead to acquire a glorified body.
3. The Rapture will change corruptible bodies into incorruptible bodies (**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**).
4. The Rapture will preserve the Church from the Great Tribulation (**Matthew 24:21; Luke 21:22**).
5. The Rapture will bring an instantaneous end to the Church Age and allow Jewish time to resume.
6. It will produce a chaos that will necessitate a leader to arise.
7. It will release the antichrist to arise, operate, and manifest.

As it stands, the Church has been given all power and authority. The Church is the great restraining force keeping the antichrist from being able to fully manifest.

(POST-TRIB VIEW)

THE ANTI-CHRIST'S PEACE AGREEMENT WILL RESTART TIME

If the pre-Tribulation rapture view is inaccurate and the Church is *not* raptured before the Tribulation begins, then the only other event that could conclude the Times of the Gentiles and reactivate Jewish Time is the 7-year peace agreement prophesied by Daniel.

- **And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week [7 years], but in the middle of the week [3.5 years] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and of the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. Daniel 9:27 NASB**

This is the only possible event that could reinstitute Jewish Time, but it does not explain how it would render the Church powerless and unable to restrain the mystery of lawlessness. Regardless, let us be the Church and restrain evil and lawlessness through our holiness and prayer-filled lifestyles.

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 5

The Rapture

The Rapture is the catching away of the saints of God by the LORD Jesus to be with him in the air.

- **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: ¹⁷Then 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.** **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**
- **Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

“Caught up together”: Greek- *harpazo*: to catch, to snatch, to lead something away.

The word “rapture” is not used anywhere in the Bible. Our word *rapture* comes from the Latin Vulgate Bible, which translates *caught up together* as *raptus*. This is why we call the “catching away” the *Rapture*.

MULTIPLE RAPTURES

Raptures are biblical occurrences. It is a way God has chosen to remove some of His servants in times past. There are five certain rapture events spoken of in the Bible and three conjectured raptures. Some raptures have already past and some are still in the future.

Six Certain Biblical Raptures:

1. Enoch- (**Genesis 5:24**) The first man to be raptured. **“For God took him.”** He walked with God. People looked for him, but they could not find him for God had taken him.
2. Elijah- (**2 Kings 2:11**) The second man to be raptured. **“And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”** He walked with God. People looked for him, but they could not find him for God had taken him.
3. Jesus Christ- (**Acts 1:9-11**) The third man to be raptured. **“He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”** He walked with God.
4. The Church- (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**) The fourth man to be raptured (the Lord’s Body). **“We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.”** *We* must walk with God!

5. The Two Witnesses- (**Revelation 11:12**) The fifth rapture event. These are the two sons of oil that stand beside the Lord of the whole earth. “**And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud.**” They shall walk with God.
6. Mid-Tribulation Saints- (**Matthew 24:29-31, Revelation 7:9-17**) **Matthew 24:31** specifically says that after the sign of the sun and moon being darkened, and the stars falling from heaven, the angels will gather up the elect of God from the four winds (cf. **Revelation 7:1**). Not all tribulation age saints will be martyred. They will walk with God at the risk of death.

Two Conjectured Raptures:

7. 144,000 Jews- (**Revelation 14:1**) There is no specific verse given for a rapture, but they are found in heaven worshipping God before the end of the tribulation. How did they get there? There is no record of the 144,000 being martyred. They will walk with God and testify of His Gospel.
8. Resurrected Saints at Christ’s Resurrection- (**Matthew 27:50-53**) Some Bible teachers believe that the saints who were raised from the dead at the resurrection of Christ were raptured with Jesus in **Acts 1** and may have made up the cloud He was carried away in. This would be a “cloud of witnesses” as spoken of in **Hebrews 12:1**.

WHAT THE CHURCH’S RAPTURE WILL BE LIKE

The Bible gives us several details of what the Rapture will be like. We should be familiar with it.

1. **Noisy**- The Rapture will be a noisy event. Jesus Christ Himself, shall descend with a shout (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**); the archangel will give voice (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**); and God the Father will blow a trumpet (**1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52**).
2. **Quick**- The Rapture will be an instantaneous event. In an *atomos* of time (**1 Corinthians 15:52**). An instant of time so quick, it literally cannot be divided into any quicker measurement of time.
3. **Transforming**- The Rapture will change our flesh and blood and sin-riddled bodies into glorified, incorruptible, immortal bodies because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (**1 Corinthians 15:50, 52-54**). The dead in Christ will rise and get their new bodies first, then we which are alive and remain (faithful to Jesus) go next.
4. **Exclusive**- The Rapture will be a very exclusive event. Only born again Christians will hear the trumpet and only faithful, prepared Christians will obey the call (**Matthew 25:1-13; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Hebrews 9:28**).
 - a. Dr. Hilton Sutton wrote, “If you grace the house of God with your presence only on Sunday morning, and never again until next Sunday morning, you cannot convince me you are ready for the catching away of the saints.”
5. **Elevating**- Jesus will not actually touch down on planet earth but will stop in the clouds and receive us to Himself. We will be caught up in “the clouds to meet the

LORD in the air” (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**). It is widely believed the world will not hear or see anything at this event.

WHEN WILL IT OCCUR?

Jesus said, “no man knows the day nor the hour, only the Father” (**Matthew 25:13**). Not even Jesus knows when He will be sent back for us. If He did, He would tell the Holy Spirit who would then reveal it to us. But Jesus did give us some symptoms preceding “our gathering together unto him” (**2 Thessalonians 2:1b**).

- Wars and rumors of wars (**Matthew 24:6**).
- International tensions (**Matthew 24:7**).
- Escalation in racial tensions (**Matthew 24:7**).
- Famines, diseases, earthquakes (**Matthew 24:7**).
- Increase in Christian persecution (**Matthew 24:8**).
- Increase in personal offense and betrayal (**Matthew 24:10**).
- Rise in false teachers and false ministries (**Matthew 24:11**).
- Increase in lawlessness, also known as modern Gnosticism (**Matthew 24:12**).
- Love will grow calloused and cold (**Matthew 24:12**).
- The great falling away. A great apostasy or defection from the truth (**2 Thessalonians 2:30**).
- The **2 Timothy 3:1-4** list.

These symptoms will continue to intensify more and more until the end of the age. The Rapture will happen seven years before the end of the age, so the real question is how bad will things get before we’re taken out of the way, and then, how much worse will our absence make things.

- **He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. ³And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? Matthew 16:2-3**

If we can see the signs, we should be able to see what’s coming. Things will continue for now because God is merciful and patient.

- **Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the LORD. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. James 5:7**

The husbandman is the Father (**John 15:1**), and the Father is waiting to get as much fruit off the vine as possible.



THE AFTER AFFECT OF THE RAPTURE

Just as people went and looked for Enoch but could not find him, and just as men went and looked three days for Elijah and could not find him, people will go and look for us and will not find us.

We can conjecture chaos. Chaos will ensue. The loss of critical workers, police, government officials, surgeons, children, pilots, bankers, teachers, power plant workers, etc. will not have a good impact on the world. Perhaps the ensuing chaos will cause the world to unanimously agree to a one-world government. What greater incentive could there be to implement a one-world government than common-global pandemonium?

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 6

Signs Of The Times And The End Of The Age

This may be one of the more enlightening lessons of this study due to the active fulfillment of Bible prophecy before our very eyes. Never forget that the Bible is a book of hope and the study of these topics should bring hope and not fear. Let us look at the signs of the times.

MATTHEW 24:3-14 (see also LUKE 21 and MARK 13)

In this very famous Bible prophecy chapter, Jesus spends His entire discourse answering three questions put forth by his disciples:

1. When shall these things be? (The destruction of the Temple. Answered in **Luke 21:20-24**; fulfilled in 70 A.D.)
2. What shall be the sign of thy coming?
3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world (*period of time, age, "the close of the age" RSV*)? See *How to Study the Bible, Lesson 2-Dispensationalism*.

Below are the signs preceding the coming of the LORD, not the Rapture, but the Second Coming. However, since the Rapture precedes the Second Coming by only seven years, we can use these events to help us recognize the season in which we live. The stronger the following symptoms, the closer we are to the Rapture.

The following are what Jesus Christ called "the beginning of sorrows," or early labor pains. These are the contractions of the end of the age, and you can't abort this pregnancy. These contractions will continue until the Millennial Kingdom is birthed into the earth (with much blood and pain).

1. Deceivers

The greatest warning issued by Jesus in response to these questions was "**be not deceived.**" This warning is proffered three times in **Matthew 24**. Jesus emphasized this point more than any other. This must be the greatest sign of the last days: a proliferation of deception. Never before have so many voices in the earth spoken so little truth. Guard your heart and stay in the Bible (**Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 23-24**). Deceivers may be the greatest enemy of the Church. This will be covered more in another lesson.

2. Wars and Rumors of Wars

Jesus warned there would be wars and rumors of wars. In the last 2,000 years there have been over 25 notable wars. Over *390 million* people have been killed in those wars. Daniel prophesied wars would continue until the end of time (**Daniel 9:26 NIV**). Jesus promised that these things must be. Peace-protesting will not be able to prevent Bible prophecy. According to Warsintheworld.com, there are currently 69 countries involved in military

conflicts (wars, civil wars, uprisings, coup d'états, etc.) encompassing 831 militias/guerilla/terrorist/separatist/anarchist groups.

3. Ethnic Uprisings

Not only will nation rise against nation, but also people group against people group. The smaller the world has become, the more people of different races have settled in foreign countries producing xenophobia (the fear of strangers) and stirring up racial tensions. Even though we are called the great melting pot, our own country is unable to move past racial divisions. Racism of any kind is demon-inspired. Resist its influence. Since the 15th century, ethnic uprisings have produced great seasons of genocide. Approximately 26 *million* people have been killed because of genocide in the last 600 years.

We might also include eugenics in this prophecy. This has been called the science of improving human population by controlled breeding, but in practice it is forced sterilization and abortion. China has forced over 300 *million* abortions and sterilizations in the last 50 years alone. America began funding eugenics around the world in the 1960s. They tactfully call it “population control,” “save the planet,” and “reproductive rights.”

According to the World Health Organization, there are 125,000 abortions a day, or nearly 50 million a year. In the US, 1 in 5 pregnancies is aborted, resulting in 3,000 abortions every day.

4. Famines

The occurrences of famines over the last 2,000 years have increased exponentially as have the death tolls. There have been over 140 major famines over the last 2,000 years claiming over an estimated 143 *million* lives.

5. Pestilences

A more modern term for pestilence is plague or epidemic. We have now been familiarized with the term “pandemic.” In the last 2,000 years there have been over 200 major epidemics brought on by diseases such as smallpox, influenza, bubonic plague, typhus, measles, yellow fever, dengue fever, cholera, malaria, polio, HIV/AIDS, mumps, and Ebola. The estimated worldwide death toll for these combined epidemics is over 240 *million* people, or nearly a quarter of a billion deaths. Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is the first pandemic to affect the whole world—bringing world governments into unity, yet destroying world economies.

6. Earthquakes in Divers Places

This may be the most subtle and lethal of all the signs prophesied due to its nature. Earthquakes happen suddenly, without warning, without prevention, instantly destroying cities and even nations. Earthquakes take more lives in less time than any other event prophesied about in **Matthew 24**.

For Example:

- 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami- 230,000 people died in 14 countries; 1.7 million displaced.
- 2010 Haiti Earthquake- According to official estimates, 316,000 people killed; 300,000 injured; 1.3 million displaced.

Compared to:

- 1945 Nagasaki and Hiroshima- approximately 200,000 killed by the two bombs. Roughly half of those were killed instantly, the others died soon thereafter in the citywide fires created by the blasts and still others succumbed in the following weeks and months from radiation poisoning or other diseases and complications.

Luke's Gospel calls them "great earthquakes" (**Luke 21:11**). Jesus did not say there would be an increase in earthquakes. He said there would be "great earthquakes in divers places." Earthquakes have killed over *2.3 million* people . . . in the last 100 years. At the time of this printing in March 2020, there were 125 earthquakes in the last 24 hours, 1,236 in the last week, 4,755 in the last 30 days, and 63,791 in the last year.

7. Many Shall be Offended, Betray, and Hate

This sin is raining down all around us. These symptoms—offense, betrayal, and hatred—are testimonies against mankind's desperately wicked heart. Offense is nothing but a violation of personal pride. Betrayal is an act of selfishness and infidelity. Hatred is one of the strongest and basest emotions when not anchored in biblical morality. Mankind will hate one another, not hate sin. Fed by the media, social media, and the demon realm, never before has mankind been so selfish, prideful, thin-skinned, and hateful. These symptoms will only increase more and more.

8. Iniquity Shall Abound

Lawlessness, wickedness, and contempt for order will abound right before Jesus Christ comes. This is evident today when peaceful demonstrations turn to riots and anarchy. Not only do prisons overflow with those who have been caught, but also the hearts of many who have not been arrested overflow with lawlessness. We have even coined phrases like, "Rules were made to be broken," and "You can't tell me what to do." This is lawlessness.

9. The Love of Many Will Grow Cold

This is an unnerving prophecy because the Greek word for love in this verse is *agape*. Only a Christian can have *agape* working in their heart (**Romans 5:5**). Jesus is promising us that many Christians will grow cold in their "sacrificial love." To "wax cold" in the Greek (*psycho*) means "to cool by blowing upon." The spirit of the world will successfully blow upon many Christians to cool off their desire to sacrifice for Jesus and one another. In modern terms, a psycho is someone who can unemotionally cut people out of their life (murder) and not care. Christians affected by this spirit will cut Jesus out of their lives. Jesus said, "**If you love me, you'll keep my commandments**" (**John 14:15**). A lack of love is tied directly to lawlessness. This is a symptom of apostasy.

DANIEL'S SIGNS (Daniel 12:4)

Daniel's vision gives us two more signs of "the times of the end."

1. Running To and Fro

Many shall run to and fro. Through technology and invention, the world has gotten smaller. Every day, approximately two million people fly in airplanes in the US alone. At any given moment there are over 9,700 airplanes in the sky, carrying 1.2 million people. 220 million people drive cars in the US every day. That is a lot of people coming and going, to and fro.

2. Knowledge Shall Abound

In our day, knowledge increases so fast it is nearly impossible to track. In computer technology alone, a law has been developed called Moore's Law. This law states that technology doubles every 24 months. The world's knowledge is at our fingertips and even in our pocket with smartphones. Over 500,000 new books are published every year. It has been estimated that every minute scientists add 2,000 pages of new material to man's knowledge base. All this knowledge and no peace, joy, or hope. Certainly, we are living in the last of the last days.

- **And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Luke 21:28**

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 7

Deceivers And Their Influence

Eschatology is the study of end time events. Two of the events prophesied about in the last days are the proliferation of deceivers and a subsequent apostasy. These prophesied events are taking place right now, so we must study what the Bible has to say about them.

DECEIVERS

Deceptions are lies interwoven and mixed with truth. In deception, there are enough elements of truth to make it palatable to the unstable and naïve soul. Deceivers are masters at mixing perversion with truth to beguile the innocent. Deception is not a threat to the heathen world; they are of their father the devil. Deception is an assault on Christians.

FALSE MINISTERS

The Bible speaks of several different kinds of false ministers. By definition, they are deemed false because they appear to be genuine and they pass themselves off as genuine, but they are in fact counterfeit. Their destructive effectiveness is based on their ability to pass themselves off as the real deal. These false offices include:

- False prophets- **Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; 1 John 4:1**
- False teachers- **2 Peter 2:1**
- False pastors- **Jeremiah 2:8, 10:21, 12:10, 23:1**
- False Christs- **Matthew 24:23-24**
- False apostles- **2 Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 2:2**
- False brethren- **2 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4**
- Note: There is no mention of a false evangelist in the Bible. It seems that adhering to simple evangelism will keep you safe.

SUCCESSFUL DECEIVERS

Jesus does not want His people deceived. However, He promised it would happen to some believers. Three times in **Matthew 24**, Jesus warns us of deceivers and false Christs.

- **And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ [*anointed*]; and shall deceive many. **Matthew 24:4-5****
- **And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. **Matthew 24:11****
- **Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. ²⁴For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great**

signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.
Matthew 24:23-24

These deceivers will target the Church and will be somewhat successful. We cannot stop them. There will be *many*, and they will deceive *many*. This can and will affect people we know. We must watch and pray and study the Word to ensure that we are not part of the “many.”

APOSTOLIC WITNESS

Paul, John, and Peter all bore witness to the wicked ministry of these deceivers and spoke of how they will operate.

- **For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:29-30**
- **But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.**
2 Timothy 3:13
- **But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.**
2 Peter 2:1-2
- **Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. . . . ⁵They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.**
1 John 4:1, 5

Paul predicted that the Church would see wolves come in from the outside and perverse speakers would arise from within to pull people away. Peter prophesied that false teachers were coming. They are here and they purposely “shuffle in destructive errors.” These teachers are producing doctrines that appeal to carnal flesh and successfully teach and promote subtle rebellion against the Spirit of Truth.

HOW DECEIVERS OPERATE

- They come in the name of Jesus (**Matthew 24:5**).
- They arise from within the Church. This denotes they start in obscurity and rise to a grand place of prominence and influence. They are the most effective on national and international platforms (**Matthew 24:11; Acts 20:30**).
- They can demonstrate signs and wonders (**Matthew 24:23,24**).
- They stealthily, subtly, and purposely bring in damnable heresies (**Acts 20:30; 2 Peter 2:1**).



- They merchandise the people of God, viewing them as merely a dollar sign (**2 Peter 2:3**) because, as enemies of the cross, they mind earthly things (**Philippians 3:18-19**).
- They are of the world and comfortably hob-knob with worldly people. True preachers fellowship in the Light and are uncomfortable around worldly settings (**1 John 4:5**).
- They have a form of godliness, but they divorce themselves from the power thereof (**2 Timothy 3:5**).
- They resist the truth because their minds are corrupted (**2 Timothy 3:8**).
- They use grace as an excuse to sin and feel no remorse (**Jude 4**).

It is my personal conviction that *very few* false ministers start off false. I believe they start off genuine and eager to build the kingdom, but later succumb to temptations, buffetings, and the workings of familiar spirits (**1 Timothy 4:1**). However, the Bible is very clear about false ministers—they are no longer God’s ministers. They have become satan’s ministers.

- **For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end is according to their works.**
2 Corinthians 11:13-15

THE END RESULT

Many carnal and lukewarm Christians are successfully finding carnal and heretical preachers to lead them in their lukewarm and damnable lifestyle. This is all the work of the spirit of antichrist. The carnal church will look for a leader and behold, one will arise and lead them into apostasy. This is the Great Falling Away!

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 8

Apostasy And The Great Falling Away

The Great Falling Away, or apostasy, is as much an eschatological event as the Rapture. Many Christians will fall away. We must guard ourselves from the deception at hand.

Apostasy: *Defection from the truth, revolt, to separate, the abandonment of faith, to divorce.*

Apostasy can only affect Christians. You cannot depart, revolt against, or abandon something you were never a part of. Many scriptures speak of this revolt. Without a doubt, the revolt is already underway. Christians are leaving the truth to embrace the very things from which they have been redeemed.

WHICH COMES FIRST?

Apostate preachers and apostate sheep go hand in hand. Where you find one, the other is not far away. We must ask the question: Which comes first, the apostate preacher or the sheep desiring apostasy? **2 Timothy 4:3** declares that there will be heaps of apostate preachers for the apostate sheep to follow. It would appear the spirit of antichrist prepares both of them simultaneously. The apostate preacher is raised up by the spirit of antichrist concurrently to the spirit of antichrist successfully producing in some Christians the desire for the world. It is a match made in hell. Stay close to Jesus!

THE GREAT FALLING AWAY

- **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [*the day of Christ*] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**
2 Thessalonians 2:3

Paul prophesied that there must come a “falling away.” This is the word *apostasy*. This verse ties the spirit of antichrist to a rebellion among Christians.

- **And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.**
Matthew 24:12

The love spoken of in this verse is *agape*, the God kind of love. Only a Christian can have *agape*. “Wax cold” is the Greek word *psycho*, to grow cold or numb. Apostasy can be defined as a Christian’s love going psycho. This prophecy will affect “many.”

- **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;**
²Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
1 Timothy 4:1-2

Paul prophesied by the Holy Spirit that in the last days some Christians would depart from the faith, being influenced to do so by seducing spirits and demonic doctrines.

Note: Doctrines teach how to live and think. In this case, demonic doctrines will be taught, and some Christians will follow them. This will produce the effect of a seared conscience. A seared conscience is worse than a calloused conscience. Christians will be seared from the effect of sin. This prophecy will affect “some.”

- For **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables [invention, falsehood].** **2 Timothy 4:3-4**

Paul prophesied of a coming time when Christians will not want sound doctrine. In fact, the Greek indicates they will not be able to sustain or bear sound doctrine. These Christians will leave sound teaching and find a teacher who will tickle their ears and give them what they want. This is one way apostasy works—people depart from the truth to find a pseudo-truth. There are already “heaps” of bad teachers.

- But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as **there shall be false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. **²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.** **2 Peter 2:1-2**

Peter prophesied that false teachers will come and teach things that appeal to many Christians. These Christians will have to leave the truth to follow the lie. They will depart from the faith to please their ears and their flesh. Their itching ears will seek out false teachers to follow. Peter’s prediction is the same as Paul’s from **2 Timothy 4:3-4**: many Christians will leave the truth to follow lies. Peter adds that these teachers will teach damning heresies that, when followed, will destroy the adherent’s formerly decent Christian witness. “Many” will follow the false teachers.

WHAT APOSTASY LOOKS LIKE

The Bible gives us several symptoms of apostasy. Let us diagnose the current state of the Church. Apostasy . . .

- Has leaders who will teach and permit sin in the Church (**2 Peter 2:1-2**).
- Abuses grace and uses it as a free pass to live dirty (**Jude 4**).
- Causes the Church to lose power (**2 Timothy 3:1**).
- Is an abounding of deception:
 - Causing the unstable soul and ignorant to be beguiled (**2 Peter 2:14**).
 - Targeting women to lead them astray (**2 Timothy 3:6-7**).



- Promoting false teachers in such abundance, producing heaps of them (**2 Timothy 4:3**).
- Produces a form of godliness but no power (**2 Timothy 3:5**).
- Causes many to be unable to endure sound doctrine (**2 Timothy 4:3**).
- Cools and callouses the love of many (**Matthew 24:12**).
 - A perverted *agape* love will cause Christians to chase, seek, and endorse causes that are not biblical.
 - Christians will love the creation more than the Creator (**Romans 1:25**).
 - Christians will lose track of the Great Commission and take up vain causes.
- Causes lawlessness to abound in the Church (**Matthew 24:12**).
- Causes many to deny the very LORD who bought them (**2 Peter 2:1**).

It would appear from these above symptoms that we are in the midst of the ramping up of full-out apostasy. May we pray without ceasing and walk with God closer than ever before.

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 9

The Spirit Of Antichrist And Its Role

We have seen how the removal of the Church allows for the uprising of the antichrist. Let us look more closely at what the spirit of the antichrist is.

ANTICHRIST IS A SPIRIT

First and foremost, we must understand the term *antichrist* refers to a demon spirit that is already at work in the earth. The epistles of John teach us about this spirit, how it behaves, and how those who yield to it will act.

- **And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 1 John 4:3**

Simply stated, the spirit of antichrist denies the Lordship and reality of Jesus Christ. There is a difference between being ignorant of Jesus Christ and blatantly denying Him. If anyone blatantly denies Him, this spirit has influenced them.

LAWLESSNESS: A WICKED FRUIT

One of the key fruits of the spirit of antichrist working in someone's life is the fruit of lawlessness. Lawlessness can be defined as: *Not governed by or obedient to laws*. In this case, we are referring to God's law—the Bible.

- **For the mystery of iniquity [*lawlessness*] doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 2 Thessalonians 2:7**

The mystery of iniquity refers to this spirit of the world and antichrist. It is already at work and will only increase as people yield to it. Laws were not made to be broken.

- **Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 1 John 3:4 NIV**

Those who actively yield to sin are yielding to the spirit of lawlessness. This is the spirit of antichrist.

“The spirit of rebellion in the heart of any person signifies that he or she is a subject of the Antichrist even before he arrives. The spirit of submission to the law of God is a supernatural result of having invited Jesus Christ into one's life.” –Tim LaHaye

- **Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.**
Ephesians 2:2

This spirit works in the lives of the lost and it has the potential to work in our lives to make us children of disobedience. The Bible is very clear in this verse: those whose willfully live disobedient have the “prince of the power of the air” working in them. A lifestyle blatantly disobedient to Jesus Christ is antichrist.

ANTICHRIST AFFECTS YOUR MOUTH

This spirit will affect what you say with your mouth.

- **Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.**
1 John 2:22

Here the Bible calls anyone who has yielded to the spirit of antichrist and allowed it to influence their faith—antichrist. Spirits will make you what they are. If you deny Christ, you are antichrist.

- **For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.**
2 John 1:7

The job of a deceiver and an antichrist is to turn people away from Jesus Christ and the Word of God. An antichrist is the total opposite of a God-ordained Gospel preacher. The Gospel preacher’s job is to turn people to Jesus and point people to the Word. Many preachers are turning people away from Jesus and sowing heresy. They are antichrist.

MANY ANTICHRISTS

- **Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.**
1 John 2:18
 - *What ye have heard concerning Antichrist, as about to make his appearance just before the return of Christ, is now fulfilled in the many false teachers, most worthy to be called antichrists. -TCBL*

According to John, the spirit of antichrist influences false teachers. This spirit causes the teachers to teach subtle lies that turn the hearer away from the truth and subvert the believer. In John’s day, there were “many” antichrists. We can be confident the number has only grown.

OTHER ANTICHRIST ATTITUDES

The spirit of antichrist is already at work in the earth today. The motive of this spirit is jealousy. It is jealous of what is rightfully God's: honor and worship. For this reason, it will cause rebellion in other forms in the lives of those who yield to it. These include:

- Resistance to Jesus Christ
- Defiance to Jesus Christ
- Refusal to pay homage to God's Word
- Hating the Church's worship of the living God
- Refusal to acknowledge that man is to be submitted to a power higher than his own
- Blaspheming God's servants
- Mocking the things of God
- Hating all that is God

AREAS WHERE ANTICHRIST IS EVIDENT

- Entertainment: hedonism rules, God is mocked, nothing is holy but self
- Universities/All Levels of Education: atheism reigns supreme
- Government/Politics: God is rejected, man is considered to have the answer
- Media: Christians are mocked, blasphemous agendas are promoted
- Secular Churches: many churches now teach inclusivity and reductionism
- Social Activism: this is biblical charity without Jesus Christ
- Environmentalism: Gaia is the new god(dess); "love your mother," worship the creation, save the planet

God help us to stay close to Jesus Christ!

ESCHATOLOGY Lesson 10 End Time Economics

Unfortunately, many Christians believe the last days will be lived out in bomb shelters filled with c-rations. This belief has taken root due in part to Hollywood, novels, fear, and cultish teachings. This teaching is not Biblical. Let us examine the scriptures to see what we can expect financially in these last days.

THE DAYS OF NOAH

- **But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**
³⁸**For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,**
³⁹**And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**
Matthew 24:37-39

Jesus indicates in this passage four aspects of life that will not be interrupted in the last days. They are:

- **Eating-** The average American household spends \$2700 a year eating out, or with about 114 million households in the US, about \$307 billion a year.
- **Drinking-** As of 2008, the average American drank 412 Coca-Colas per year, or America consumed over 123 billion Cokes in 2008.
- **Marrying-** As of 2012, the average American wedding cost about \$27,800. This includes: limousines, spas, flowers, gifts, catering, make-up, dress rentals, etc. All vital businesses that make up a healthy economy.
- **Giving in Marriage-** Brides are given in marriage by their fathers as part of ceremony and celebration. Ceremony and celebration are not typically found in bomb shelters or militia bunkers. The fact that Jesus indicates fathers will still be giving their daughters away in marriage lets us know that people will feel a sense of safety and will be able to plan for big events like weddings.

The picture painted by Jesus is not one of Christians living in caves or fallout shelters, starving to death, hoping Jesus comes before their dehydrated food rations run out and the diesel generator runs dry. Jesus painted a picture of a continuing economy and society.

THE DAYS OF LOT

- **Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they buildded;** ²⁹**But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.**
Luke 17:28-29

Here, Jesus Himself likens the conditions leading up to His return to the conditions in Lot's day. Notice what was going on the very day Lot was taken out of Sodom:

- **Eating-** As of 2018, Americans were spending \$800 billion dollars a year on groceries.
- **Drinking-** America spends about \$74 billion a year on sodas.
- **Buying-** Americans spent \$970 billion dollars at retail stores in 2018. . . at Christmas time.
- **Selling-** If someone is buying, someone must be selling. In 2010, eBay (the most popular internet self-auction site) saw \$2 billion in sales on its mobile apps alone.
- **Planting-** This speaks of the agricultural industry. Though there will be famines, remember there have always been famines, but Sodom's sin was "**pride, fullness of bread...**" (Ezekiel 16:49).
- **Building-** Building can only take place in a culture and an economy healthy enough to sustain population growth and thereby demand a need for more homes, retail, business, and industry.

All of the activities spoken of by Jesus are primary economic indicators. The implied emphasis here is on the fact that it was "business as usual" up until the moment that heaven rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom. This is how Jesus said it would be before He returns—business as usual.

COMMERCE AFTER OUR DEPARTURE

Without a doubt, the rapture of the Church will cause pandemonium, both socially and financially. We can conjecture that this chaos will call for a leader to rise from the ashes and lead the people in a new world government. A government must have something to govern and certainly there will be plenty still here.

Babylonian Commerce

It appears commerce will continue worldwide until Babylon is destroyed. This is a literal city and will probably be modern Baghdad. It will be the center of world commerce.

- **Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come. ¹¹And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: ¹²The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, ¹³And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. ¹⁴And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. ¹⁵The merchants of these things, which were**

made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.
Revelation 18:10-15

Anything you could want will be available to purchase. These verses reveal a very healthy economy with mining, textiles, agriculture, beauty, food, transportation, livestock, and even slave industries in strong operation. **Verse 14** declares that goodly and dainty things will be available as opposed to rationed and freeze-dried. Business will be good enough to make the merchants wealthy.

Sea Commerce

The Revelation indicates business as usual at sea:

- The second angel sounds his trumpet and a great burning mountain is cast into the sea, turning a third part of it to blood, killing a third part of the sea life, and **“the third part of the ships were destroyed” (Revelation 8:9).**
- When the mighty city of Babylon is destroyed it will bankrupt many people including the merchant ships.
 - **For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, ¹⁸And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! ¹⁹And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.**

Revelation 18:17-19

Merchant vessels will still be operating and making a profit. This speaks of imports and exports during the rise of the antichrist.

The Mark of the Beast

Nearly everyone is familiar with the expression “the mark of the beast.” This “mark” is tied directly to commerce.

- **And he [the Beast] causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**
Revelation 13:16-17

There are still six classifications of society during the reign of the antichrist: small, great, rich, poor, free, and bond. The mark of the beast will be necessary to be a part of the Babylonian economy.

Other Commerce Observations

- People will have houses full of stuff. They are commanded to not come in from the field nor come down from their roof to save it (**Luke 17:31**).
- Two shall be lying in a bed (**Luke 17:34**). This speaks of safety and comfort and provision. One will be taken. The other shall be left.
- Two will be grinding at the mill (**Luke 17:35**). This speaks of commerce and employment. There will be mills. There will be something to grind. There will be people to grind it. One will be taken. The other shall be left.
- Two shall be working in a field (**Luke 17:36**). This speaks of commerce and safety. Agricultural work requires peace. You don't harvest crops in time of war with the threat of being shot in your tractor. One will be taken. The other shall be left.
- When the two witnesses are slain, the people of the world will see it, rejoice, and send each other gifts (**Revelation 11:4-10**). From this we see that international communications will still be up and running and people will have the excess income to buy gifts and then send them to each other.
- Babylon will have in it harpers, musicians, pipers, trumpeters, craftsmen, merchants, and food production (millstones). The arts are only developed and enjoyed in peacetime. This will not cease until God destroys Babylon (**Revelation 18:21-23**).
- The kings of the earth with their armies will gather themselves together against the LORD Jesus (**Revelation 19:19**). You can't build an army without wealth and commerce and intense infrastructure. You must have factories and workers and supply chains feeding the war machine.

As Christians, we have Bible commands and promises to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteous and then all the things that the Gentiles seek after will be added unto us and "the Lord shall supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 4:19**). God has always been and will always be our Provider. Fear Not! Furthermore, hoarding violates the epistle of James:

- **If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?
James 2:15-16**

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 11

The Antichrist: His Character And Attributes

We have seen how the spirit of antichrist is already at work in the earth. There are already many antichrists in the earth today. This does not mean they are *the* antichrist; only that they have yielded to the influence of the spirit of antichrist.

We will look at the antichrist, his character, and his attributes in this lesson. Though the Bible has much to say about this man, the one thing not revealed is his name.

The antichrist will be a singular man (women need not apply) who is fully possessed of the spirit of antichrist. He will be used of satan himself to try and take over the world. Satan has always tried to take over the world and the antichrist will be his last attempt to do so. It should be noted that satan has never succeeded at world domination and this last attempt will only last seven years. That's a short reign (one that is never truly realized).

JESUS CHRIST AND THE ANTICHRIST COMPARED

Jesus is the Christ. The antichrist is the total opposite of Jesus. Below is a biblical comparison, originally compiled by the late Dr. Clarence Larkin.

Christ came from above -John 6:38	Antichrist will ascend from the pit -Revelation 11:7
Christ came in His Father's name -John 5:43	Antichrist will come in his own name -John 5:43
Christ humbled Himself -Philippian 2:8	Antichrist will exalt himself -2 Thessalonians 2:4
Christ was despised -Isaiah 53:3; Luke 23:18	Antichrist will be admired -Revelation 13:3-4
Christ will be exalted -Philippians 2:9	Antichrist will be cast down to hell -Isaiah 14:14-15; Revelation 19:20
Christ came to do His Father's will -John 6:38	Antichrist will come to do his own will -Daniel 11:36
Christ came to save -Luke 19:10	Antichrist will come to destroy -Daniel 8:24
Christ is the "good shepherd" -John 10:1-15	Antichrist is the "idol shepherd" -Zechariah 11:16-17
Christ is the "true vine" -John 15:1	Antichrist is the "vine of the earth" -Revelation 14:18
Christ is the "truth" -John 14:6	Antichrist is the "lie" -2 Thessalonians 2:11
Christ is the "holy one"	Antichrist is the "lawless one"

-Mark 1:24	-2 Thessalonians 2:8
Christ is the “man of sorrows” -Isaiah 53:3	Antichrist is the “man of sin” -2 Thessalonians 2:3
Christ is the “Son of God” -Luke 1:35	Antichrist is the “son of perdition” -2 Thessalonians 2:3
Christ is “the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh” -1 Timothy 3:16	Antichrist will be “the mystery of iniquity,” Satan manifest in the flesh -2 Thessalonians 2:7

BIBLICAL NAMES DESCRIBING THE ANTICHRIST

- *Man of sin:* **2 Thessalonians 2:3**- He is the embodiment of sin and rebellion.
- *Son of Perdition:* **2 Thessalonians 2:3**- His very existence awaits eternal judgment.
- *Lawless One:* **2 Thessalonians 2:8**- He submits to no law and seeks to change existing laws (**Daniel 7:25**).
- *Wicked One:* **2 Thessalonians 2:8**- The world will have a leader after their own heart.
- *King:* **Daniel 8:23**- He will rule and have power. His promotion will come through satan himself.
- *Little horn:* **Daniel 7:8**- A horn represents a kingdom or ruling power. He will rule, but in the end, he is still just “little” in the eyes of God.

THE ANTICHRIST’S ATTRIBUTES

The book of Daniel and the Revelation reveal a great deal to us about the antichrist. We know he will be a political figure of some sort, for only they can rule people. Let us see what else the Bible says about him.

World-Class Orator

Several passages let us know that he will be a very confident, eloquent, and persuasive speaker. Just as Hitler and Mussolini were great orators who privately planned destruction, so too the antichrist will woo the masses with sugarcoated death. His eloquence will make his blasphemies palatable to mankind.

- **...and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things [proud things, impressive things, boastful things].**
Daniel 7:8b
- **...even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.** **Daniel 7:20b**
- **And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;...** **Revelation 13:5a**

Deceitful

It should come as no surprise that the antichrist will be deceptive. His deception will flourish for a short season (no more than seven years). He will win the hearts of people through his deception.

- **And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper his hand; . . .**
Daniel 8:25a
- ***He will succeed in all his clever and treacherous ways, (Beck Translation)***
- ***He will cleverly use his power to deceive others successfully (God's Word Translation)***
- **Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**
2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

Homosexual

The scriptures give interesting information concerning the antichrist's sexual orientation.

- **Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.**
Daniel 11:37
- **And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.**
Revelation 11:8

The antichrist will not desire women and when he moves his activities to Jerusalem, it causes Jerusalem to be known as a spiritual Sodom and Egypt. Sodom speaks of sexual immorality, specifically homosexuality, and Egypt speaks of heathen worship. He will personify both of these.

Irreligious

The antichrist will not honor any one religion. He will not be devout about anything but himself.

- **Neither shall he regard the God [*elohim*] of his fathers, . . . nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.**
Daniel 11:37

He will not push a Muslim agenda or a Jewish agenda. He will push satan's agenda of world domination.

Fierce Countenance



The antichrist will have anger issues and a mighty face.

- **And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.** Daniel 8:23
- **...whose look was more stout than his fellows.** Daniel 7:20b
- **... looked more imposing, (NIV)**
- **... seemed stronger, (Berkley Translation)**

The antichrist will have a presence that is quite intimidating. No doubt this is due to his extreme demonic possession.

The Bible has provided us with some insight into the characteristics of the antichrist. Next, we will cover his assignment. Be encouraged and remember, he cannot accomplish it with us here. We are the great restrainer, Praise God!!!

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 12

The Antichrist: His Power, Assignment, And Opposition

As we have seen, the antichrist (also called the Beast) is a man used of satan to try to take over the world. He will be fully possessed by the spirit of antichrist (the same spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience). Keep in mind that the antichrist is a mere man. His power is not his own but comes from satan himself.

HIS POWER

The antichrist gets his power from satan. He will be the most demonized man to have ever lived.

- **And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.**
Daniel 8:24

His mighty power will not be his own. He will be empowered by satan and he will prosper for a season.

His power will be supernatural in nature.

- **Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all [*miracle*] power and signs and lying wonders.**
2 Thessalonians 2:9

The antichrist will have satan himself working in and through him to not only be a political success but to also produce lying signs and wonders.

He will be satan's representative on the earth just as Jesus Christ was God's representative on the earth.

- **And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. . . ⁴And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, . . .**
Revelation 13:2, 4a

Satan will give the antichrist three tools:

1. Pure satanic power. This is the Greek word *dunamis*: *miracle power*. He will work signs and wonders just as Pharaoh's sorcerers did before Moses.
2. The use of satan's seat. This is the Greek word *thronos*: *kingly throne seat*. Satan is the god of this world. He rules from a seat of authority. He will allow the Beast/antichrist to sit on his throne and be worshipped.

3. Great authority. This is the power of rule or government.

Satan will equip this man, the antichrist, with everything necessary to be worshipped, to work signs and wonders, and to rule and govern the earth. Everything Jesus Christ is and has, this man will pretend to be. This is another reason this man is called the antichrist.

By raising up a man and anointing him with demon power to become the antichrist, we can see how satan will try to mimic the true and living God.

HIS ASSIGNMENT

The antichrist will not be empowered for his own pleasure or purpose. He will be in agreement with satan for a given cause and assignment. One verse can sum up the entire assignment:

- **It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.**

Revelation 13:7

This is his assignment. It is not his success story. Just because you are given an assignment does not mean you will accomplish it. He does not succeed at what he is given to do. He overcomes some saints, but not all. He rules over some kindreds, tongues, and nations, but not all. This assignment is the same thing satan has attempted since the garden. He has never succeeded, and he never will.

Daniel first saw the antichrist in action in a vision. His vision confirms what John saw concerning the antichrist's assignment.

- **And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.**

Daniel 8:24

The antichrist will be a destroyer and will prosper at it for a season. He will destroy both powerful people, such as political opponents, and the saints alike.

It appears he will be satanically empowered to wage war.

- **But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces [*munitions*]: . . . ³⁹Thus shall he do in the most strong holds [*fortresses of munitions*] with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.**

Daniel 11:38a, 39

This further testifies to his source of power being demonic in origin.

HIS OPPOSITION

Modern theology has taught us a doom and gloom scenario concerning the antichrist. To be fair, he will kill many Christians and condemn many to eternal damnation, but he will *not* rule the whole earth, he will have continuous opposition, and he will *not* succeed at his assignment.

Political Opposition

He will not be liked by everyone. From the beginning, he will have opposition.

- **And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.**
Daniel 7:24

These ten kings make up the last kingdom of mankind. They have yet to arise. The antichrist will be the little horn among these ten horns. He will have opposition from three of the horns/kings and will have to subdue them and cast down their opposition.

The 144,000 Witnesses

- **And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.**
Revelation 7:4

These 144,000 Jewish witnesses will evangelize throughout the whole earth during the first half of the Tribulation, and they will do so right under the antichrist's nose as he is establishing his political power. They will be able to reap a mighty harvest of souls.

The Two Witnesses

- **And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**
Revelation 11:3

These two witnesses will openly prophesy and minister for three and a half years during the antichrist's reign of power. They will be so successful and such a powerful voice of righteousness that when they are finally killed, the entire world will rejoice at their corpses and even exchange gifts to celebrate their death.

Military Opposition in the End

The antichrist will fall out of favor with the nations rather rapidly and will face opposition from several nations in the end.

- **At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them**

like a flood.

Daniel 11:40 NIV

These nations will move against him militarily.

A giant army from the east will arise against him and move against him.

- **But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.
⁴⁵. . .yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.**

Daniel 11:44, 45b

It appears the antichrist will face opposition from the north, the east, and the south. There is no mention of a western opposition but since his headquarters will be Jerusalem at this time, the only thing to the west is the Mediterranean Sea.

These armies are not only the antichrist's enemies; they are also God's enemies. They will join themselves together against the antichrist only to join forces with him against the coming Christ. This will be the work of the LORD.

- **Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: ¹⁰Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. ¹¹Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. ¹²Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. ¹³Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. ¹⁴Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.**

Joel 3:9-14

These great heathen armies will gather themselves in the Valley of Jezreel, also known as the Valley of Megiddo, by the command of God. They will gather there to destroy the antichrist only to join forces with him against the Risen Christ.

- **And I saw the beast [antichrist], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse [Jesus Christ], and against his army.**

Revelation 19:19

They will unknowingly have assembled in what the Bible calls "the great winepress of the wrath of God." There He will tread them down in destruction until blood fills that valley five feet deep.



- **And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him,. . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.** **Revelation 19:20**

The antichrist survives the battle only to be taken alive and cast into eternal damnation alive. Thus ends the seven-year, attempted reign of the antichrist.

See also: Revelation 14:17-20, 19:17-19; Ezekiel 39:17-22

ESCHATOLOGY

Lesson 13

The Final Harvests

Though the end of all things is at hand and the LORD, the Righteous Judge, *will* judge all things, He is still a merciful God and Savior. He will give every person an opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ. Let us make no mistake about it, God will cast many into eternal damnation for their rebellion, but it will be because they do *not* want to serve the true and living God. Jesus will be preached to everyone before the end comes.

THE RIGHTEOUS HARVESTS

The LORD will have His harvest of righteous souls. He is eager to send laborers out into His harvest.

- **Therefore he said unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Luke 10:2**
- **Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. James 5:7**

The LORD is very patient, longsuffering, and merciful. He is not willing to see His harvest rot in the field. We must not only pray for more laborers for the harvest, but also be one of those laborers for the final harvest of souls.

The Church

Right now it is the Church's responsibility to testify of Jesus to as many as possible. The Church has been entrusted with the Great Commission. We are to go into all the world and preach the gospel of the kingdom. This harvest is our responsibility.

- **When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁷And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. ⁸But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:6-8**

Even before Jesus left, the disciples were curious about the end times. They wanted to know when the end was coming. Jesus instead pointed them to the immediate work at hand: preaching the Gospel to the entire world. We are currently reaping this harvest.

The 144,000

After our departure, the LORD will anoint 144,000 witnesses to do the work of the Gospel. These witnesses will pick up where we leave off.

- **And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.**
Revelation 7:4

These 144,000 witnesses, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, will be like 144,000 Apostle Pauls and Apostle Peters and Philip the Evangelist, going throughout the earth preaching the Gospel to the lost. Israel will be used to preach the Gospel of their LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This will result in a great harvest.

- **After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ¹⁰And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.**
Revelation 7:9-10

In the vision, John sees first, the 144,000 on the earth. Then he looks and sees the result in Heaven: an innumerable company of saints worshipping Jesus Christ at His throne.

The Two Witnesses

The LORD will send in two mighty preachers called “The Two Witnesses.” They will preach, prophesy, and work signs and wonders the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

- **And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**
Revelation 11:3

Their death will cause the world to rejoice. Their resurrection will cause great fear to come to them. Their rapture into heaven will produce a great earthquake in Jerusalem that will kill 7,000 men. The remnant will turn and repent and give glory to the God of Heaven (**Revelation 11:13**).

The Angels

Unique to the Tribulation is the Gospel-preaching angel. Currently, angels do not preach the Gospel. It has not been entrusted to them. This will change when the Church is raptured.

- **And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**

Revelation 14:6-7

From verse 7, you can see how simple the Gospel can be: Fear God and give Him glory! No doubt angels can travel faster than humans and they will help preach this Gospel to the ends of the earth.

- **And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. ¹⁶And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.**

Revelation 14:14-16

The angels shall reap the final great harvest. Then shall the end come.

THE WICKED HARVEST

The final harvest to be reaped is the wicked, the enemies of God. The Bible speaks about this supernatural harvest in several passages. The angels will reap this harvest.

- **I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. ⁴For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.**

Isaiah 63:3-4

Isaiah saw the day of the vengeance of the LORD. It was a winepress of wrath. This winepress required fruit. Joel saw the fruit required for the winepress of wrath.

- **Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.**

Joel 3:13

The fruit necessary for the LORD's winepress of wrath is the wicked. The LORD will reap a harvest of wicked souls who have purposely rejected Him and blasphemed Him, and He will crush them. John saw this very image literally thousands of years later.

- **And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. ¹⁸And another angel came out from the altar, which had power**

over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. ¹⁹And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. Revelation 14:17-20

This harvest will be brought to the Valley of Megiddo for what is famously known as Armageddon. This battle will only last one hour and God wins.

Jesus also spoke of angels harvesting the wicked.

- **As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. ⁴¹The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴²And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 13:40-42**

Let us walk with Jesus and reap His harvest as these final days close. Be of good cheer! We're on the winning team. All that is left to do is walk with God!