November 22, 2026
"The Apostasy & the Antichrist" (pt.2)
2 Thessalonians 2:1–12
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Who is the Antichrist? When will he appear on the world scene? Or is he here now? The Bible predicts that a charismatic, geo-political leader will emerge on the world stage to lead the world astray. He will oppose and blaspheme God, then declare himself to be God. But the Lord Jesus will return to overthrow him and cast him into the Lake of Fire!

1. **2 Thessalonians 2:1–12** – *"[1] Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, [2] not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. [3] Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, [4] who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

   [5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, [10] and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, [12] that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

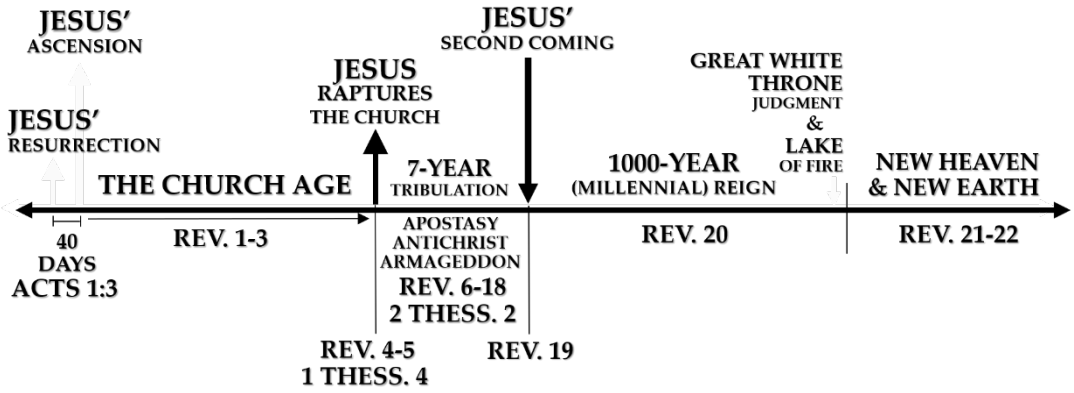
2. Context
   a. Jesus is coming again.
      i. Because Jesus came to save us at His first coming as He promised, we can trust Him to keep His word that He will come again.
      ii. We cannot know the day or the hour of Jesus' coming.
         1. **Mark 13:32** – *"Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*
         2. Anyone who claims to know the date of Jesus' return is contradicting Christ and acting as a false prophet.
         3. **DISCUSS**: If someone you trust or listen to says something that contradicts Scripture, who do you choose to believe? Who or what is your source of truth?
      iii. But we should know the signs of Jesus' coming.

1. Be wise to what is happening in the world.
2. **Matthew 24:27, 31–33** – *"[27] For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. . . .*

   [31] And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

   [32] Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. [33] So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!"

b. The timeline:



   i. The rapture brings the present church age to a close.
   ii. **1 Thessalonians 4:16–17** – *"[16] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*
      1. In Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible, the phrase *"caught up"* was translated as **raptus**.
      2. Believers will be caught up in the air with the Lord before the tribulation begins.
   iii. The second coming of Jesus has two parts:
      1. Part one: the rapture.
      2. Part two: Jesus comes to earth to establish His kingdom.
   iv. After the rapture follows the seven-year tribulation period.
      1. The time of trouble serves both as God's judgment on a Christ-rejecting world and a final call to salvation.
      2. People will still be getting saved during the tribulation.

3. A fear corrected

a. Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians to assure Believers that they had not missed the rapture.
    i. The Thessalonians had assumed they were in the tribulation period that follows the rapture because of the persecution they were facing.
    ii. There is a difference between the tribulation that everyone faces and the tribulation to come upon the whole world.
b. To reassure them, Paul spoke of two things that needed to happen before the Lord's return:
    i. Many *"falling away"* from the faith (apostasy)
        1. In the last days, many will abandon the faith.
            a. **1 Timothy 4:1** – *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."* (1984 NIV)
        2. Many will deconstruct.
        3. Many will leave the faith entirely.
            a. There is a trending movement of "exvangelicals"—people who no longer identify as evangelicals.
        4. But revival can happen alongside apostasy.
            a. **DISCUSS**: Have you seen both revival and apostasy happen simultaneously? How can you be part of the revival?
    ii. The revealing of *"the man of sin," "the son of perdition,"* or *"the lawless one"* (Antichrist).
        1. God did not tell us about the coming of the Antichrist and the time of trouble to scare us, but to prepare us.
        2. Prophecies should give us a sense of urgency to:
            a. Get right with God.
            b. Help others know Jesus so they can get right with God.
        3. **DISCUSS**: How can you live with a sense of urgency and be prepared for the coming of the Lord? How can you encourage others to do the same?

4. Distinguishing between the Antichrist and the antichrists
    a. **1 John 2:18** – *"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour."*
        i. *"Little children"* is simply an endearment from an elderly John to a beloved church.
    b. In John's writings, he wrote of the antichrists in the world two times and of the Antichrist still to come two times.
        i. There are leaders throughout history who have operated in the spirit of antichrist.
            1. Nero was an antichrist. He dipped Christians in tar and lit them on fire to illuminate his garden.

2. Nero was so vile that preterists (those who believe that Revelation is a historical record, not a prophecy) think that the Antichrist was Nero.
3. Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Idi Amin, the Ayatollah, and Muslim leaders around the world were all ruthless tyrants—they were antichrists.
4. These lowercase "a" antichrists were not the Antichrist.

ii. The Antichrist of Revelation is yet to come.

5. The Antichrist revealed
   a. Titles for the Antichrist
      i. The Antichrist (**1 John 2:18; 1 John 4:3**)
         1. He is best known by his title as the Antichrist, but this title only appears four times in the Bible.
         2. Only John ever refers to the Antichrist by that title, and only in 1 and 2 John.
      ii. The Man of Sin (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**)
      iii. The Son of Perdition (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**)
         1. Other translations call him, *"The man doomed to destruction,"* which is what perdition means.
         2. The Antichrist will be eternally condemned and is given a title that matches his eventual end.
         3. Only two people in the Bible are called *"the son of perdition"*—the Antichrist and Judas (**John 17:12**), who betrayed Jesus.
         4. The Bible gives us many examples of demonic possession, but the only recorded instances of Satan possessing a person is when he entered Judas and will enter the Antichrist.
      iv. The Lawless One (**2 Thessalonians 2:8**)
      v. The Foolish and Worthless Shepherd (**Zechariah 11:15, 17**)
      vi. The Prince (**Daniel 9:26**)
      vii. The King Who Exalts Himself (**Daniel 11:36–45**)
      viii. The Beast out of the Sea (**Revelation 13–20**)
         1. This title is used over 25 times in Revelation.
         2. The *"sea"* is a symbolic way to say that the Antichrist is coming from the sea of humanity.
   b. Descriptions of the Antichrist
      i. The Antichrist will be a charismatic, political world leader possessed and empowered by Satan.
         1. **2 Thessalonians 2:9–10** – *"[9] The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, [10] and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved."*
            a. The end of verse 10 implies that these people could have been saved, but they chose to reject Christ.

b. The Antichrist will come in the spirit and power of Satan.

2. **Revelation 13:2, 4** – *"[2] Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. . . . [4] So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'"*
    a. The *"dragon"* is Satan.

ii. The Antichrist will introduce a seven-year peace treaty with Israel.
1. He will arrange a seven-year peace treaty with Israel.
    a. **Daniel 9:27** – *"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up and abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."* (1984 NIV)
    b. In Hebrew, this *"seven"* refers to a seven-year period. That is how long the peace treaty is meant to last.
    c. That covenant, or peace treaty, ushers in a period of false world peace, one world religion, and the false prophet.
    d. **DISCUSS**: How do you see our culture sowing the seeds for the coming of the ecumenical one world religion?
2. At the midway point, he will be given dictatorial powers by a 10-nation confederation to rule the world (**Revelation 17:12–13**).
    a. **Daniel 7:24–25** – *"[24] The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. [25] He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."*
    b. A *"time"* is one year, *"times"* is two years, and *"half a time"* is half a year. That adds up to 3.5 years.
    c. Panic leads people to easily give up power.
    d. Just as the Covid epidemic led to a more centralized power structure, so the tribulation will herald in a time when the world is divided into ten geographical regions, and these will eventually hand over their power to the Antichrist.
3. After 3.5 years, he will break the treaty and proclaim himself to be God at the temple (**Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13:1–10**).
    a. The temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.
    b. There is no temple in Jerusalem now, but there is enough room in the temple mount for it.

c. The mention of a temple in Revelation implies that the temple will be rebuilt.
d. At this point, the Jews realize they've been deceived.

iii. The Antichrist will oppose and blaspheme God (**Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:36–37**).
1. **Daniel 11:37** – *"He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all."*
a. The phrase *"the God of his fathers,"* is used to refer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
b. The fact that the Antichrist is denying the God of *"his"* fathers implies that he will likely be ethnically Jewish.
c. The Antichrist will also have no regard for *"the desire of women,"* which was a phrase indicating the desire women had back to be chosen to give birth to the Messiah.
2. **Revelation 13:5–6, 15** – *"[5] He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months [3.5 years]. [6] Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. . . .*

[15] He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."
3. **2 Thessalonians 2:3–4** – *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*
4. **Mark 13:14** – *"When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."* (1984 NIV)
a. The *"abomination"* is that the Antichrist enters the temple and demands to be worshiped.
b. **DISCUSS**: If your body is the temple of God (**1 Corinthians 3:16**), who should be on the throne of your heart? Is there anything in your life that is standing where it does not belong?

iv. The Antichrist will gather the nations together against Israel for the Battle of Armageddon.

1. **Revelation 16:14–16** – *"[14] They are spirits of demons, performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them to the battle on the great day of God Almighty.*

   [15] 'Behold, I am coming as a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.'

   [16] Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon." (1984 NIV)
2. The word *"Armageddon"* only appears once in the Bible.
3. The battle occurs at the foot of the hill of Megiddo, hence the name Armageddon, which is in Hebrew **Har** (mount) **Megiddo.**
4. When Jesus comes in judgment, the battle then spills over into the Kidron Valley, where the blood of God's enemies will rise to the level of horses' bridles (literally or figuratively).
5. **Revelation 19:19** – *"I saw the beast [the Antichrist], the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army."*
6. The Man on the horse is Jesus, who will come against the enemies of God.
7. In His first coming, Jesus came riding on a donkey, meek and mild.
8. At His second coming, Jesus will come riding on a white horse to judge the world with the double-edged sword in His mouth.

v. The Antichrist will be overthrown by Jesus at the Lord's second coming and cast into the lake of fire.
   1. **Revelation 19:20** – *"The beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. By these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them [the Antichrist and the False Prophet] were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur."* (1984 NIV)
      a. The Bible teaches eternal suffering is the fate of all who reject Christ.
      b. **DISCUSS**: Why is it difficult for some to accept the doctrine of eternal conscious torment? How are you learning to trust in the wisdom and justice of God?
   2. **2 Thessalonians 2:8** – *"The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."*
      a. The Lord triumphs over all His enemies.
      b. **DISCUSS**: How does knowing the end of the story comfort you in your daily life?

3. The word *"revealed"* appears three times in **2 Thessalonians 2** in relation with the Antichrist.
    a. **2 Thessalonians 2:3** – *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition."*
    b. **2 Thessalonians 2:6** – *"Now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time."*
    c. **2 Thessalonians 2:8** – *"Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."*
4. Perhaps we will be present when the Antichrist is revealed but not when he comes to full power, though this matter is debated among Bible scholars.

6. Be prepared
    a. A wake-up call
        i. Cataclysmic events will occur to wake up a God-forsaking, Christ-rejecting world.
        ii. You do not need to wait until the world is ending to turn to the Lord.
            1. **DISCUSS**: Have you turned to the Lord? If you have, are you living in a way that reflects well on the God you serve?
    b. Be prepared.
        i. Jesus died so we could be forgiven and reconciled to God.
            1. **2 Peter 3:9b** – The Lord is *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*
            2. God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked (**Ezekiel 18:23**).
        ii. We do not need to face the wrath of God and perish.
    c. **2 Thessalonians 2:15–17** – *"[15] Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. [16] Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, [17] comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work."*

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)