



## Antichrist Revealed, and Then the Rapture

Steven J. Hogan — May 3, 2020

### A Wrong Impression

The apostle Paul had written a letter to the Thessalonian church (1 Thessalonians), and much of it focused on the future, with details about the coming of Christ. But it wasn't long before Paul became very concerned about the Thessalonians, for he heard that many in this young church were alarmed and troubled. They somehow had gotten the impression that the Day of the Lord had already begun, which worried them and made them wonder if they were even saved, and therefore had missed the Rapture.

Paul dearly loved these Christians and knew he needed to write another letter to clear up any confusion, to answer any questions they had. In 2 Thessalonians 1, he told them that the Rapture – and the relief that comes with it – would occur before God's retribution, before the Day of the Lord, and before God's punishment of unrepentant sinners. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1, Paul reminded them that at the coming of the Lord all believers would be gathered to Him. Then in verse 2, Paul referred to the Day of the Lord.

But before we go further, you need to see how the coming of the Lord and the Day of the Lord relate to each other.

First, let me define the word “coming.” “Coming” is a noun and means “arrival and continuing presence,” and in this case, the arrival and presence of the Lord Jesus. It is not referring to a simple, instantaneous event, but to a comprehensive whole which includes many events directed by Christ.

The first event to occur at His coming will be the Rapture of the Church, immediately followed by the second event, the Day of the Lord. I say “immediately” because of what Luke 17:29-30 says: “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

What this tells us is that the Day of the Lord will begin on the same day as the Rapture of the Church. At the coming of Christ, the Church will be raptured, and after that, on that same day, the Day of the Lord will begin.

### The “Apostasy” and “Revealing”

Now, let's go back to 2 Thessalonians 2. In vs. 1, Paul speaks of the coming of the Lord. In verse 2 he mentions the Day of the Lord. In verse 3 he tells us about two identifiable events that will occur before the Day of the Lord, and also before the coming of the Lord. He says there will be the apostasy, and that the man of lawlessness will be revealed. The word "apostasy" means "rebellion," "defiance," or "defection," and I believe part of this apostasy will relate to the revealing of this lawless man – the Antichrist – which will occur at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week (a seven-year timeframe – Daniel 9:27).

Let me explain the connection between the apostasy and the revealing of the Antichrist. Within the first half of Daniel's 70th Week, the Jewish people will be permitted to build a temple and offer sacrifices to God. After this, the Antichrist – in total defiance of God – will desecrate this temple. Verse 4 tells us that he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (see also Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15).

This shocking display of pride and power, along with other signs, will cause many Jews, and so-called religious people around the world to be deceived, defect, and turn away from God (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). The result will be that most of them will begin to worship this lawless man, this beast, this Antichrist (Revelation 13:3-17). What Paul is saying is that the apostasy and the revealing of the Antichrist will occur before the Day of the Lord.

These two events did not take place in Paul's day, and almost 2,000 years later still have not taken place. In particular, we have not seen the Antichrist on Earth, at least not yet. Therefore, we know that the Day of the Lord has not yet begun, and we know that the Lord has not yet come in the clouds and raptured the Church, but He will, and it will not be long from now!

### **Know What is Happening**

The Antichrist will be revealed at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, and after that, at some unknown time to us, the coming of the Lord and the Day of the Lord will begin. Because the Rapture of the Church will be the first event to occur at the coming of the Lord, we know the Rapture will take place sometime after the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week – after the Antichrist is revealed, sometime during the last half of that 7-year period. This means Christians will be living on Earth when the Antichrist is revealed, and ruling over the world.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 says: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." The word "beseech" can be translated "beg" or "plead." In verse 3, Paul says: "Let no man deceive you by any means." Paul, a concerned pastor, was strongly pleading with these young Christians, warning them not to be tricked or led astray by anyone, in any way.

I have the same concern that you know the truth about the end-times and the coming of Christ, and are not at all deceived, confused, or in error. God wants you to know about these events that will take place before the coming of the Lord, and also have a clear grasp as to where they fit in, that is, understanding the sequence of these end-time events. When you understand these things, you will realize that you may go through some short-lived tribulation brought on by the Antichrist, but you will not go through the eternal wrath brought on by God.

This is very good news, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10).

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