

What Will The Antichrist Do?

Our study is from 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9. It is about the antichrist and what he will do in the future. We will start by discovering when he will first appear. Then we will learn what the Bible teaches he will do during his reign over the world. Finally, we will find out how he will die.

I want to start by reading 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10. I will read through verse 10 because verse 8 starts a long sentence that does not end until verse 10.

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying him-

self as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 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. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 (NASB)



This passage is not organized according to the chronological order of future events. Paul was not trying to teach the believers in Thessalonica the order of future events, but about the character of the antichrist, when he will be revealed, how he will be empowered, and when he will die. Therefore, I want to take the verses in chronological order. So we will begin with verses 6-8a, because they teach us when the antichrist will be revealed.

ANTICHRIST REVEALED WHEN THE TRIBULATION BEGINS. It is important to know that verses 4-5 are a parenthesis, and verse 6 is a continuation of verse 3. Notice that verse 3 ended by saying,

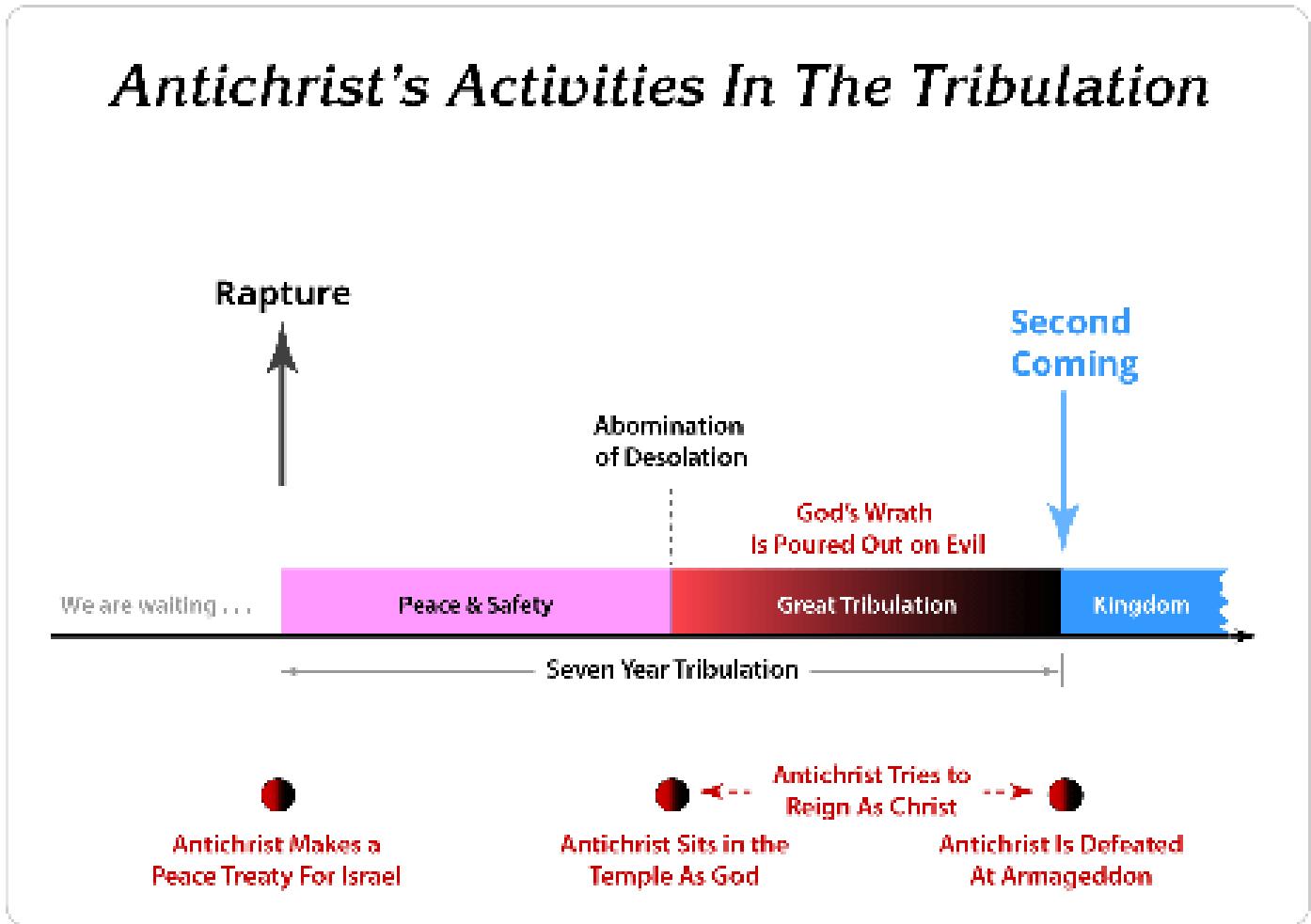
... it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed... 2 Thessalonians 2:3b (NASB)

The "it" in this verse refers to the Day of the Lord, which is mentioned in verse 2. Remember the Day of the Lord and the tribulation start at the same time. Verse 3 says the Day of the Lord will not start until two things happen. First, the apostasy must occur. The apostasy is the worldwide rejection of Christ by people both outside the church and inside the church. When I say inside the church, I am referring to people who are not really Christians. The second thing that must happen is that the man of lawlessness is revealed. We learned in our last study that the man of lawlessness is the antichrist. In fact, we learned the characteristics of the antichrist. His characteristics will help us identify this man when he appears. We learned

that he will be a lawless individual. The actual Greek calls him a “no-law” man. Notice how many times he is described as lawless in this passage. He is called a man of lawlessness in verse 3. He is called that “lawless one” in verse 8, and the mystery of lawlessness is mentioned in verse 7. He will be the ultimate example of lawlessness that will sweep the world in the last

Paul tells us the antichrist is being restrained and will be restrained until “his time,” whenever that will be. Since we are not told when “his time” will happen, we do not know when it will occur. It did not occur in their time. It has not occurred in our time yet. That means it is still in our future.

The last part of verse 6 says, “in his time he will be revealed.”



days. This means the major characteristic of this individual is that he will be lawless. He will ignore any and every law just doing as he pleases. The point is that he must appear before the Day of the Lord or the tribulation begins.

Antichrist is Being Restrained. Verse 6 tells us that the antichrist has not yet been revealed. It says,

And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 2 Thessalonians 2:6 (NASB)

The “he” in this verse could be the Greek word *autos* or *heautou*. If the Greek word was *heautou* that would mean the antichrist would reveal himself. Then the verse would say, “he will reveal himself.” The Greek word is *autos*, which means that God will reveal the antichrist. This is clear even from a plain sense reading of the passage. So God is restraining him now, but some day God will reveal him. God is in total control.

Now remember in our last study that we learned from Zechariah 11:15-17 that God will give the antichrist to the

nation of Israel. Since they rejected Christ, who is the Good Shepherd, God will give them the antichrist, the foolish and worthless shepherd. The message of Scripture is that God will give Israel the antichrist and God will reveal the antichrist when He wants to reveal this lawless one to the world. God is in total control of the end time events.

So how will God reveal the antichrist? In the first part of verse 6, Paul writes, “And you know what restrains him now.” The literal sense of the Greek word for restraining is “to hold back” or “to hold down.” The antichrist is being held back. This implies that any person could qualify as the antichrist. Yet, there is only one man whom God will allow to be the antichrist. I find it interesting that Paul tells the believers in Thessalonica that they knew who was restraining the antichrist. That is, the believers in Thessalonica were given information that we have not been given. This means Paul had already taught about the future. It is not recorded in our Bible.

In verse 7, Paul reveals that lawlessness is increasing, and the antichrist is also being restrained at the same time. The verse says,

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. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NASB)

When we are told the “mystery of lawlessness is already at work,” the Greek word for mystery, *musterion*, refers to something that has been “kept secret for long ages past” (Romans 16:25). God had kept secret the gradual increase in lawlessness until Paul wrote about it. But when Paul wrote, God wanted us to know about it. 1 John 4:3 also warned the early Christians that the spirit of the antichrist was already among them.

... this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 1 John 4:3 (NASB)

That is, the spirit of the antichrist is increasing and becoming worse. It appears that Paul is teaching us the man who will be the antichrist will not appear until the world is so lawless that it will accept him. The mystery of lawlessness is increasing!

The Restrainer is the Holy Spirit. Then Paul added in verse 7, “he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” Now Paul does not provide any more information about the restrainer because the believers in the city of Thessalonica already knew the identity of the restrainer. But we have not been told specifically! Therefore, we should not be surprised that two thousand years later there is a wide variety of opinions. Some think the gospel is the restrainer. They believe that when people are becoming Christians, that prevents lawlessness from increasing. That is a nice idea, but we ourselves are witnesses that that has not been true. In fact, Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:12-14 that lawlessness will increase while at the same time the gospel is spreading throughout the world.

Some think the restrainer is the church since Jesus said we are the salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). But the parable about believers being salt and light is not that we prevent or hinder the growth of sin, but that we are in stark contrast to the darkness in the world. Others think the restrainer is human government since Romans 13:1-4 states that human governments are given for the purpose of suppressing evil. Some think the moral law written in our conscience is the restrainer (Romans 2:14-15). But that would suggest that at some point, God will remove the moral law written into the conscience of everyone at the beginning of the tribulation. Some have suggested that Michael the archangel is the restrainer. But Jude 9 reveals that Michael “dare not pronounce against him a railing judgment.” All of these ideas fail the most obvious test. The only power that can hold back evil until the “his time” (verse 6) is the Holy Spirit. No one else has the power to hinder Satan and the antichrist, not the church, or human government.

When Will the Restrainer be Removed? Now we must ask, “When will the restrainer be removed?” The answer is that He will be removed at the rapture when the church is removed from the earth. Since the Holy Spirit indwells or lives within believers, the Holy Spirit will not be removed before the church is removed. Since the antichrist will be revealed before the rapture, this means that the restrainer will be removed before the tribulation. This means the restrainer is the Holy Spirit, and He will be removed at the rapture. When this occurs, the antichrist will be revealed and begin his work.

This also agrees with Daniel 9:27 which says,

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on 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)

The “he” is mentioned in verse 26 as the “prince who is to come.” As we discovered in our last study, he is the antichrist. He will make a peace treaty with Israel. At this point, it will be obvious to anyone who has knowledge of biblical prophecy that this person is the antichrist. As we discovered in our last study, “How to Identify the Antichrist,” it might be possible to identify him even earlier by his character and behavior.

ANTICHRIST WILL DECLARE HE IS GOD. So, the antichrist will establish peace for Israel. He will act as a shepherd for Israel. When the Day of the Lord starts, the seven-year tribulation will also start. The first half of the seven-year tribulation will be a time of peace (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). But in the middle of the tribulation, he will declare to the world that he is god. We learned in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 that he will exalt himself as a god. Verse 4 says,

... who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NASB)

This passage also agrees with Matthew 24:15 where Jesus refers to Daniel 9:27. It says the abomination of desolation will occur in the temple after 3.5 years into the tribulation. This will be a significant event. When the antichrist does this, he will also declare war on every religion. Notice that verse 4 says he will be opposed against every so-called god.

Revelation 13:3-8 tells us the whole world will worship the antichrist. The world will be so evil that they will believe the lie that he is god. He will make war against anyone who opposes him. Here are verses 3-8.

And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the

beast, and who is able to wage war with him?” There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. Revelation 13:3-8 (NASB)

Notice in verse 5 that we are told the antichrist will have total power for 42 months. That is, 3.5 years. The message is he will insist that the world worship him during the last half of the tribulation. This reveals that he wants to be like Christ. He will want total control and have everyone worship him. He will truly be anti or against Christ. For 3.5 years he will rule the world, but he will be faced with one major crisis after another.

God’s Wrath Poured Out. Why? The answer is that God will pour out His wrath on the world with the plagues of seven seals, seven trumpets, and the seven bowls because of antichrist’s evil behavior and because the world will be worshipping him. The destruction will be so significant that one-third of the earth will be devastated by the trumpets (Revelation 8:6-12). Demons will be released upon the earth and be allowed to torment people without mercy. Covid-19 will be like the common cold compared to this. Revelation 9:12-19 reveals that demons will be released in order to kill one-third of the population of the world. Revelation 9:20-21 reveals that most unbelievers will not repent because of the trumpet plagues.

Consequently, God will bring seven bowls of wrath on those who have the mark of the beast and worship the antichrist. That is, unbelievers. The bowls are described in Revelation 16:2-17. The bowls are designed to cause extreme physical suffering and death. The final two bowls are about the battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation. In Matthew 24:16-22, Jesus warns those who will be living in the tribulation to run and hide for safety. The last half of the tribulation will be a horrible time.

ANTICHRIST WILL BE EMPOWERED BY SATAN. Now we must ask an important question, “How can this one man have this much power?” There are several parts to this answer. First, as we discovered in our last study, God will give him to Israel as the foolish and worthless shepherd (Zechariah 11:15-17). In time, he is also given the world. Second, God will remove the restrainer so that the antichrist can do as he pleases. Third, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10a says the antichrist will be empowered by Satan. Here is the verse,

... that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness . . . 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10a (NASB)

Since we have already been told that the spirit of the antichrist is already here, this means that some or many of our leaders are already significantly under the influence of Satan. Revelation 13:1-4 and Revelation 16:13-14 tell us the antichrist and the false prophet will be demon possessed. These verses also teach that Satan will give his power to the antichrist. So, that is how the antichrist will be able to rule the world and force the world to worship him.

Daniel 11:36-45 is another passage about the antichrist. In verses 38-39 we are told that the antichrist will be helped by a foreign god. As a result, the antichrist will have incredible military power. Verse 39 says he will rule over many and control the financial markets of the world.

These Scriptures help us understand the passage that we just read. Verse 9 tells us that the antichrist will operate with the “activity of Satan.” The Greek word for ‘activity’ is *energeia*. It refers to energy. Therefore, we are to understand the antichrist will have great energy. The Greek word for “power” is often translated as miracles in the gospels. The Greek word for “signs” refers to “acts” that will draw people’s attention to him. The Greek word for “wonders” refers to “astonishing acts.” We know from chapter 1 of Job that Satan can cause people to die if God permits it. Satan can change the weather and cause lightning to bolt out of the sky. Satan can possess people and give them superhuman strength. The point of 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10a is the antichrist will be able to deceive with false wonders. He will look like a superhuman or god to

unbelievers. Most people of the earth will think he is a god. Most of the people on the earth will be in terror of him.

ANTICHRIST WILL DIE AT THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON. Yet, the Old Testament gives us prophecies about the battle of Armageddon in such passages as Ezekiel 38-39; Joel 3:1-16; Zechariah 12:1-14:7. But I will just summarize the battle from Daniel 11:40-45. This passage describes a series of battles that will occur during the last 3.5 years of the tribulation. These verses describe military or battle maneuvers. The battles in verses 40-43 may all occur in the final months of the tribulation. While there is uncertainty about the timing of verses 40-43, it is clear that verses 44-45 describe the maneuvers of the battle of Armageddon. Daniel 11:44-45 says,

But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him. Daniel 11:44-45 (NASB)

These verses tell us that armies will come from the east and north. Ezekiel 38-39 and Daniel 11:2-35 help us identify the major armies as belonging to the nations from the territories of Syria, Iraq, Iran, and North into Russia. Maybe China is involved since armies come from the East. Some believe the antichrist is from Europe or the United States since we are told in Daniel 9:26 that the people of the “prince who is to come” are the individuals who destroyed Jerusalem. Who destroyed Jerusalem? The Roman army destroyed Jerusalem. Since many of them are of European and Arabic descent, this helps us understand that the antichrist may be of European or of Arabic descent. Note that Daniel 11:37 says that the antichrist will not have a “desire for women.” That indicates he may be a homosexual or single. That does not mean positively that he will not be married.

Now returning to Daniel 11:44-45, we are told that all military powers of the world will be drawn to Jerusalem. Now why would armies from the North and East engage the antichrist in a major battle? The answer is not given to us in Scripture. But it is obvious that after seven years, some nations may no longer want to be under the rule of the antichrist. A common

Maneuvers At Battle of Armageddon

Kings of the North and East Against The Antichrist (Daniel 11:44-45)



conclusion is that this a rebellion of parts of the world against the antichrist.

Scripture teaches that God will draw the armies of the world to Jerusalem. Repeatedly, God has said that He will draw the nations of the world to the Battle of Armageddon. Daniel 11:45 says that the antichrist “will come to his end and no one will help him.” Why will no one help him? Because Christ will kill him. No one can stop Christ from having victory.

Revelation 19:19-21 describes his death like this:

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and

against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. Revelation 19:19-21 (NASB)

CONCLUSION. So, in conclusion let’s look at verse 5 in 2 Thessalonians 2. The verse says,

Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling

[you these things? 2 Thessalonians 2:4-5 \(NASB\)](#)

There is more to this verse than Paul revealing that the believers in Thessalonica forgot about some important facts of prophecy. The message for us is that God wants believers to know the future. Notice that Paul rebuked them in a nice manner for forgetting.

This verse also reveals that Paul had taught them about prophecy. We know from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 that Paul taught them about the rapture and the Day of the Lord. In every chapter of 1 Thessalonians, Paul referred to the second coming of Christ. In 2 Timothy 2:17-18, Paul rebuked two men for teaching error about future things. The point of these verses is that God wants us to know His plan for the future.

It is important to know that twenty-two percent of all the prophetic verses in the Bible refer to the second coming of Christ. Every author of the New Testament taught about the second coming of Christ. Next to salvation, the second coming of Christ is the next most prominent theme of the NT. Finally, of the 333 specific biblical prophecies about Christ's two advents, two-thirds of them deal with Christ's second coming. Now why would God give us this information if He did not want us to know? Have you ever wondered if He wants to comfort us by revealing His plan for us? Whatever your answer, He reveals that He loves us.

We must remember that future prophecy about the second coming of Christ has two purposes. First, it is a warning about coming judgment on a Christ-rejecting world. God is warning unbelievers that when Christ comes, it is time for judgment. The antichrist and the false prophet will be judged. Satan will be cast into a prison for one thousand years and finally put into the lake of fire, which has been created for him and his army of demons. Every unbeliever will be judged and join him in the lake of fire.

But for Christians it is a glorious future. We should thank God that He is telling believers that He loves us. This should motivate us to share the prophecy of the rapture and the second coming of Christ with unbelievers. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Come!