

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

The Responsibility of Making Right Choices Politically

II Thessalonians 2:1-12

¹ The scripture today is a description of the predicted Anti-Christ. So why the title “The Responsibility of Making Right Choices Politically”?

Let me give you the description first and then tie the title to it. ²

Let’s now check out Second Thessalonians, chapter 2, verses 1 through 12. Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ¹ ₃

¹ II Thessalonians 2:1-4.

Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.² ⁴

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.³

² II Thessalonians 2:5-8.

³ II Thessalonians 2:9-12.

The message today answers three questions; How does the Bible describe the Anti-Christ; how did history describe the Anti-Christ and how does understanding this become important to you? ⁵

So, let's look at . . .

I. How Does the Bible Describe the Anti-Christ?

How does the Bible describe the Anti-Christ?

Let's look at some basic descriptions. ⁶

The first is in First John, chapter 2, verse 18 and 22, **Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. . . Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist — he denies the Father and the Son. The Anti-Christ denies that Jesus is the Christ.** ⁷

Next is First John, chapter 4, verse 3, Every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. The Anti-Christ denies that Jesus is from God. ⁸

Then, in Second John, verse 7, Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. The Anti-Christ denies Jesus coming in the flesh. He is a deceiver. ⁹

You will recognize the Anti-Christ because **he is the complete opposite of the Lord!** ¹⁰

The Lord Jesus is personified as righteousness. ⁴ ¹¹

The Anti-Christ is personified as lawlessness (unrighteousness). ⁵ ¹²

⁴ Acts 3:14 - You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

⁵ II Thessalonians 2:3 - Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

The Lord Jesus is the author of life. ⁶ ₁₃ The Anti-Christ is doomed to destruction. ⁷ ₁₄

The Lord Jesus submitted to the Father's will. ⁸ ₁₅ The Anti-Christ opposes the Father and exalts himself, calling himself "God". ⁹ ₁₆

Lord Jesus was revealed at the right time. ¹⁰ ₁₇ So will be the Anti-Christ. ¹¹ ₁₈

Lord Jesus existed as a mystery, then a revelation. ¹² ₁₉ So will the Anti-Christ. ¹³ ₂₀

⁶ Acts 3:15 - You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

⁷ II Thessalonians 2:3 - Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

⁸ Luke 22:42 - Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.

⁹ II Thessalonians 2:4 - He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

¹⁰ Galatians 4:4 - But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law.

¹¹ II Thessalonians 2:6 - And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

¹² Romans 16:25-26 - the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known . . .

Lord Jesus was concealed and personified in the Law of Moses. ¹⁴₂₁ The Anti-Christ begins as lawless to become the lawless one! ¹⁵₂₂

Lord Jesus will come again in splendor. ²³ The Anti-Christ will be the work of Satan. ¹⁶₂₄

Lord Jesus came as a working of God with signs. ¹⁷₂₅
The Anti-Christ comes as a working of Satan with false signs. ¹⁸₂₆

Lord Jesus brought the gospel of truth with salvation.
²⁷ The Anti-Christ will bring a false gospel for destruction. ¹⁹₂₈

¹³ II Thessalonians 2:6 & 8 - And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. . . And then the lawless one will be revealed . . .

¹⁴ John 5:46 - If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

¹⁵ II Thessalonians 2:7-8 - For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work . . . And then the lawless one will be revealed.

¹⁶ II Thessalonians 2:8-9 - . . . Whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan . . .

¹⁷ Ephesians 1:19-20 - That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

¹⁸ II Thessalonians 2:9 - The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders . . .

The kingdom of God rests on faith in truth. ²⁹ The kingdom of Satan rests on faith in deception. ²⁰ ³⁰

II. How Has History Described the Anti-Christ?

How has history described the Anti-Christ? ³¹

What has been the historical traditional Protestant understanding of the Anti-Christ's identity?

Please understand that the Protestant movement was a rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church. Whenever you protest against something, your focus is on what you're protesting. In this case, it was the Pope and the authority he exerted over everyone's life. ³²

To them, the papacy was the Anti-Christ. What was their reasoning for this? ³³

¹⁹ **II Thessalonians 2:10 - . . . in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.**

²⁰ **II Thessalonians 2:11-12 - For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.**

The Roman Church always had one man as its supreme authority. ³⁴

They look at verse 3 from our passage today, **Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.** They conclude that the one man came from an apostasy, a falling away: the Roman Church.

³⁵

Then, verse 7 and 8, **For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed .**

. . The apostasy was restrained by one person, Emperor Caesar, when the Apostle Paul was writing this letter. ³⁶

Notice in verse 7, **the secret power of lawlessness is already at work.** The church bishops were already setting up the Roman Church while secular Rome was still in control of this restraint. ³⁷

Continuing in verses 7 and 8, **till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed . . .** When the restraints were taken away, the Popes appeared. ³⁸

Then, in verse 4 we find, **He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.** The Popes were called, "Our Lord God the Pope, another God upon earth". ³⁹

Verse 4 also states that the Anti-Christ **sets himself up in God's temple**. So, the Protestants say, the Popes sit in the Temple of God, the church, reigning over it! ⁴⁰

But there is another possible conclusion to this scripture. ⁴¹ There are reasons why the papacy might not be the Anti-Christ. ⁴²

The Pope claims that Jesus is the Christ, contrary to what First John, chapter 2, verse 22 says about the Anti-Christ, **Who is the liar? It is the man who denies**

that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist
— he denies the Father and the Son. 43

Popes have been around for over 1500 years and the Lord hasn't come yet. So, the time element isn't there.

44

There are reasons why this may still be a future event.
45 **Today, morals are getting worse. Society is becoming more indifferent to faith.** 46

Atheism is becoming more acceptable. Culture is rapidly fleeing from Christian values. Homosexuality is socially acceptable. More state legislators are making it legal to murder babies, in or out of the womb. Mind inhibiting drugs are legally allowed for recreation in many places. 47

There have been others in modern history who have claimed to be God. Just a few years ago Sun Myung Moon, the leader of the Unification Church headquartered in Korea, claimed to be the Christ. 48

So . . .

III. How Does Understanding This Become Important to You?

How does understanding this become important to you? ⁴⁹

First, it's very likely the Anti-Christ will be swept into power by popular opinion.

Recall, this is what happened with Adolph Hitler in Germany. After World War I Germany was left in shambles.

The People's Party was voted into power to lead Germany out of poverty. Ferdinand Porsche was commissioned to design a vehicle every German family could afford to own. The Volkswagen appeared.

Public works and infrastructure began to flourish. The German autobahn system emerged as the finest road network in the world rivaled only by the American Interstate highway system which didn't appear until decades later.

Germany built a powerful and technologically advanced military unrivalled anywhere at the time.

The German people initially loved Hitler. He was their hero and rescuer. The Third Reich was able to take over very easily. 50

That's why it's important for you to vote wisely for our government leaders. You have the responsibility of making the right choices politically. Study the issues and learn the pros and cons for each electable candidate regardless of political party.

Recently our American elections have been "romantic" ones. We elected our first African American president a few years ago and nearly elected our first woman. We seem to have the national mindset of wanting to elect "firsts" rather than who might be the best. We've got to really be careful and take the election of those who have authority over us seriously. 51

When choosing occupations or employment, think of relationships at work as well as the income you might make. The people you work for can make your life joyful or miserable.

Single women especially be careful. Watch rebounds and choose your boyfriends very carefully.

The same issue is true in the church. That's why it's important for you to vote wisely for church leaders. They have spiritual authority over you before the Lord. Wise choices are so important. Study the Bible for leadership qualifications. ⁵²

It's far more damaging having to deal with poorly elected leaders than it is to elect them in the first place!

Study God's word. Take this seriously. Vote intelligently!