**Lesson: The Son of Perdition**

The text for this lesson (2 TH 2:1–10) is the scripture preceding the text from the June 2021 lesson entitled, *The Grand Delusion* (2 TH 2:11–12).

* 2 TH 2:1–10 ~ I implore you brothers, as we await the coming of our Lord to gather us unto Himself, that you do not feel unsettled or afraid about some prophecy, teaching, or account as if it was from us or as if the day of Christ had arrived. Do not let anyone deceive you, for there will be a falling away prior to the revealing of the son of perdition who opposes everything that is of God; he will exalt himself above all others including God, demanding worship as he sits in the temple pretending to be God. Remember when I explained these things while I was with you? Now you know what is being held back, until the designated time when the evil son is revealed. The mystery of iniquity already is at work. But the one letting it proceed will continue to do so until he is moved out of the way. Then the wicked one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The man of lawlessness arrives first, to do the work of Satan with evil power, fake signs, and lying wonders; through deceptions of unrighteousness, people will perish because they did not receive the love of the truth that could save them.
* 2 TH 2:11–12 ~ For this reason God will send them a strong delusion, allowing them to believe the lie. They will be damned for not believing the truth, while finding pleasure in unrighteousness instead.

St. Paul was warning everyone not to fall for the lies and deceptions being disseminated throughout the world; do not be nervous or fearful because this is merely an initiation to the end (see the March 2022 lesson entitled, “*The Beginning of Sorrows*”). There will be a massive departure from faith, spirituality, godliness, and morality (see the February 2022 lesson, “*Rebellion and Lawlessness*”). You might want to review the three lessons cited above to see how this all fits together.

So, who exactly is that son of perdition, the lawless one who performs the works of Satan? Well, he is the one often referred to as Antichrist. Of course, anyone denying Jesus as God in the flesh (who died to save us from our sins and was raised to life to save us from death) is an antichrist. A distinction is being made between an antichrist and The Antichrist, also referred to as The Beast.

* ISA 32:6–7 ~ The vile person comes speaking blasphemy and working evil and hypocrisy, opposing God Himself. His instruments are wickedness, lies, and dishonor.
* 1 JO 2:18,22 ~ You have heard that the antichrist comes; in fact, many antichrists are here already. This is a sign that the days are nearing an end. Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar; whoever denies both Jesus Christ and the Father is an antichrist.
* REV 13:1–18 ~ While standing on the seashore I saw a beast rise out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns; a crown was on each horn, and on each head was the name of blasphemy. And the dragon (Satan) gave him power. One of the heads was wounded but healed itself. The world marveled at the beast and worshipped the beast, and they worshipped the dragon that gave power to the beast. The people said, “Who is like the beast? Who can possibly oppose him?” The beast spoke blasphemy against God for 3 ½ years. He waged war against anyone who was holy, and defeated them. He gained power over all races, peoples, and nations. Everyone except the righteous honored the beast. Then another beast with two horns arrived, speaking like the dragon. He exercised the same power as the first beast, performing magic feats such as bringing fire down from heaven. He convinced everyone to worship the first beast, and to make a graven image of it. And the second beast brought the image of the beast to life. He caused everyone to receive the mark of the beast on their right hand or forehead; only those with the mark could buy and sell goods. They tracked down and murdered anyone who didn’t receive the mark and worship the beast. The beast’s number is the number of a man: 666.

Unfortunately, many will sell out and buy into the deception, corruption, and depravity. I wonder, who in their right mind would fall for this? But then again, they are not in their right mind for they are delusional, which is a central criterion in diagnosing psychosis. Apparently, the world will develop this “shared psychosis” which is a rare phenomenon indeed, but is inevitable since it has been prophesied in the Bible. You sure don’t want to align with them, knowing the ultimate consequence will be eternal damnation.

The Bible speaks of many mysteries that humankind cannot fathom, until and unless God reveals the solution. There are revelations in the Bible which explain mysteries, while other riddles have yet to be resolved. For example, the mystery of salvation is explained succinctly throughout the Bible, to include the involvement of all three persons of the Holy Trinity (another mystery not easily comprehended). Understanding any mystery of scripture requires the counsel of the Holy Spirit, without which one can neither understand the concept of our triune God, nor tell the difference between true prophecy or miracles and contrived prophecy or miracles.

* MAR 4:11 ~ Jesus said to His disciples, “You have been given the ability to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God. To the unbelievers, God’s mystery is seen in parables, for Isaiah wrote (ISA 6:9) that they would see but not perceive, and they would hear but not understand.”
* ROM 16:25–26 ~ Christ has the power to save you according to the revelation of God’s mystery, which was kept secret since the world began but which is now evident by the scriptures. According to God’s will the mystery is made known to all nations on earth for the obedience of faith.
* 1 CO 2:7–16 ~ We speak the wisdom of God as a mystery, even the hidden wisdom of God, which He ordained and which none of the rulers of this world knew, otherwise they would not have crucified Christ. It is written: Eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, nor the heart discerned the things that God has prepared for those who love Him (ISA 64:4). God has revealed these things to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the deepest things of God. These things we speak, not in the words which humanity teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But natural people do not receive spiritual things of God for these things are foolishness to them; neither can they know these things because they need to be discerned spiritually. But those who are spiritual analyze everything and are judged by nobody. Nobody knows the mind of God that they can instruct Him, but those who are spiritual have the mind of Christ.
* EPH 3:3–6,9–11 ~ Paul wrote: In a revelation, God showed me the mystery of Christ, and I must share that mystery with the world. It is a mystery that was hidden but is now revealed through His apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. For the Gentiles will be fellow heirs with the Jews, and will partake of the promise that came true through Christ by the Gospel. All people can know the mystery which God hid from the beginning of the world, and the eternal purpose for which Jesus Christ our Lord has come.
* COL 1:26–27; COL 2:2–3 ~ The mystery, hidden from ages past, has now been revealed to the saints, to whom God will give the riches of His glory. It is for anyone who turns to Christ for their hope, including the Gentiles. The riches come from assured understanding and knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge abide.

Then there is the mystery of our transformation into glorified bodies to live with the Lord Jesus forever upon His return.

* 1 CO 15:51–58 ~ Here is a mystery of God: We will not all sleep (die) but we will all be changed. Upon Christ’s return, in a single moment when the great trumpet sounds, Christ’s own, whether alive or dead will arise into heaven to receive new, incorruptible bodies. Hence, the corruptible will have become incorruptible and the mortal will have become immortal. Then at the end, when He delivers the kingdom of God to the Father, He will destroy death, at which time the statement “death is swallowed up in victory” will be true. The godly will receive spiritual bodies which will never die. The flesh is of the earth, the spirit is of heaven; thus, flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, be confident in your faith because your labor is not in vain.
* 1 JO 3:2 ~ Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will become is not yet known. But we do know this: when He returns for us, we will become like Him, for we shall see Him as He really is.

Let’s zero in on the passage in this lesson regarding the “holding back” of the man of lawlessness until the designated time (2 TH 2:7). Apparently, God is preparing to reveal something about lawlessness and evil that we cannot comprehend. And we may not comprehend it until the “restrainer” has “moved out of the way.” Eventually, evil will be eliminated, this we know. But before that occurs, there will be a final empire of malevolence, commandeered by the Beast, or Satan. The introduction of Satan’s protegee (the son of perdition) is being held up for reasons known only to God. Perhaps God is holding back time for those still looking for Him, before the scales are tipped and the majority of the last generation give into the grand delusion. Further, God may be waiting until Antichrist is revealed, after which those denying His Son will feel the full extent of God’s wrath. It is possible that believers never will comprehend the full wrath of God, for we will be moved away from it (JER 30:7; REV 3:10).

* DAN 7:23–25 ~ The four beasts represent four kings that will come (REV 13 & 17). The fourth beast, which represents the fourth king, is different: exceedingly terrible. The ten horns represent ten kings; three of them fall, while one replaces them. This evil one will speak great things against God and will make war with the saints, defeating them. He will change the times and the rules. He will reign for a time, times, and half a time (3 ½ years).
* REV 10:7 ~ When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the mystery of God will be finished, as He declared to the prophets and the saints.
* REV 17:5,9–11,15 ~ On her head was written: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes and all earthly abominations. This is the great city that sits on seven mountains and over many waters, nations, and peoples. The seven heads represent seven mountains on which the new Babylon (the great whore) sits. There are seven kings, five have fallen, one is currently in power, and one is yet to come; the seventh will reign for a short time. The beast is the eighth king and one of the seven.

Tracking history, we find five kingdoms or empires which had fallen when St. John penned Revelation (see REV 17 above): Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medio-Persian, and Greek. The sixth empire existing while John was alive was Rome. The seventh empire which was a short reign could have been Nazi Germany (some suggest Ottoman, but that was hardly a short conquest, and they never occupied Europe). Regardless, the logical conclusion is that the eighth and final empire will be that of the Beast, and it comes next. John mentioned this would be a repeat of one of the seven previous empires. John wrote about a New Babylon, strikingly similar to the Old Babylon (some people also refer to the last kingdom as the revived Roman empire). Maybe the eighth is a repeat of all seven fallen empires since each fell due to deception, corruption, and depravity.

Once the son of perdition is revealed, we can expect all of the trials and tribulations associated with the “beginning of sorrows” discussed in last month’s lesson. Thank God that His chosen will be spared the horrific end when Christ returns to gather us unto Himself.

By Andrew Barber (Posted 04/01/2022)