

Some from outside their congregation were attempting to undermine their faith. From the first we noticed enemies seemed to be trying to discredit Paul personally. He countered this in his first epistle by reminding them of the character and conduct they had witnessed in him and his companions. Now the opposition was attempting to undermine what he had taught them. He alerts them to fake messages or letters, as if from him. The opposition apparently knew enough of his teaching that they could purposely distort it. So they deliberately did that rather than believe it. These were probably Jews that resented Paul's conversion, his preaching Jesus Christ (thereby exposing their guilt) and his success at "stealing" their followers. Their unbelief but foreshadowed their descendants' acceptance of a lie and a false Christ in the future.

The Thessalonian believers, and we, should not be deceived by any means regarding the day of Christ. Some had contradicted Paul and said their present suffering was because it was the day of Christ already. Paul declares the day of Christ will not come until some rather significant events occur. There will be apostasy first and the man of sin will be revealed. That hasn't happened yet. Yes, there have been many who have apostatized and much apostasy in parts of Christendom but no wholesale, across-the-board apostasy. There has always remained a faithful remnant somewhere on earth even in the darkest of times in the history of the Christian testimony since Pentecost. Upon the Day of Christ there will be no remnant left behind at all. No remnant to be witnessing, no remnant to be persecuted. That's all over then for Christians. Why? Because they (we) are not here on earth anymore. No not one! They are all safe and at rest, ch. 1:7. Instead a sinister figure will rise to prominence amongst the Jewish people. When this happens there will be a structure already in Jerusalem known as the "Temple of God" where this false Christ takes his seat, publically claiming he is God. He is characterized as that man of sin and as the son of perdition. Presently neither the Christians nor Jews would receive a man claiming to be Christ. Many men have tried it, some deluded, some impostors, but none popularly accepted. But there is an increasing number of orthodox Jews even today who are looking for the appearance of their Messiah (Christ). As a nation they still do not accept that Jesus is the Christ. They will soon willingly receive this Man of Sin as their Messiah when he appears on the scene.

John 5:43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

He may actually be living now, being prepared by his mentor, Satan, for his future role in Satan's endeavor to take control of the whole earth. Adam forfeited his God given dominion by obeying the Serpent. Jesus, the Second Man, the true Messiah (Christ) bought the earth with His

own blood when crucified centuries ago, but God hasn't given Him the go ahead to claim it yet. This is the time of the kingdom of His patience (cheerful endurance) while He gathers the lost into His Assembly.

Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The persecution the Thessalonians suffered was a part of that patience. It is **still** the time of His patience today.

Why will the devil think he can take full control at that time if he hasn't been able to up till then? Something is changed. Not by any power of Satan or of man, but something is changed. In verses 6 and 7 Paul reveals there is One who restrains, holds down. [The term "let" used in the KJV meant "restrain" in 1611 when that translation was done.] This restraint is to be taken out of the way. Who takes it out of the way? Not Satan. He can't, though trying since Pentecost. What is this restraint? It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the bodies of the believers.

1Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

He also presently dwells in the Assembly as a whole, the Temple of the Holy Spirit spoken of in other epistles.

Ephesians 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

1Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

2Corinthians 6:16 ...for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The Holy Spirit is the One who restrains the devil and his agents, both unseen beings and men, including the Man of Sin spoken of here. The Holy Spirit is taken out of the way when His present temple on earth is removed to heaven. He goes when we go. When He who restrains is taken out of the way the devil is free to take complete control of the whole world. He apparently believes this is his chance for victory over One he considers to be his arch rival, Jesus Christ. He apparently is so completely overtaken in his pride and self esteem that he easily believes he can now win in his rebellion against his Maker. He will not accept the fact he has already lost it all because of the cross. We've all heard of people like that, who will never give up though pursuing a lost cause against impossible odds. Some who stubbornly will never submit to authority.

The Devil uses this Man of Sin as his front, his Anti-Christ, to displace Jesus Christ from the minds of the dwellers on earth (Revelation 3:10) left behind after the Rapture. Who is this man of Sin? He is only a man. But a remarkable man who in his pride, self conceit and ambition who, on his path to power, easily becomes a

hireling of Satan. And he easily becomes a charismatic religious leader on the earth, especially in Israel for he will be a Jew by birth. He is spoken of elsewhere in scripture, as well. He and his actions are described in Daniel, by the Lord Himself in the Gospels and by John in his first epistle. Other references to him are found in the Prophets and the Psalms.

He is an arrogant, probably self deceived, impostor taking to himself power and prominence that have attracted many ambitious men in the past. He is gifted with natural abilities and supernatural powers by Satan and uses them to deceive the multitudes on the earth. The Israelis will be his special dupes because they refused the true Messiah when He had come to them. He will promise and provide the national peace and safety they have yearned for for so long, 1Thessalonians 5:3. But it will prove to be a mirage. Sudden destruction will break forth. This will not just be

occasional catastrophic natural events (earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes) allowed by the providence of a loving God to try men's souls and draw them to him. No, this will be the **wrath of the Lamb** on the rebellious earth dwellers who have refused His Son. Judgement, scheduled, timed, measured, but sure, and increasingly intense as the years go on. The beginning is shown in the seals of Revelation 6.

Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

More next week.

By Ron Canner, December 14, 2005

Some Scriptures About the Man of Sin.

{The "abomination" is an idol. The "desolator" is an attacking nation.}

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

*Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. {but...: or, and shall have nothing} {desolations...: or, it shall be cut off by desolations} 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the **overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.** {for the...: or, with the abominable armies} {the desolate: or, the desolator}*

*Daniel 11:36 And the **king** shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. 37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for **he shall magnify himself above all.** 38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. {in...: or, as for the Almighty God, in his seat he shall honour yea, he shall honour a god, whom, etc} {estate: or, stead} {forces: or, munitions: Heb. Mauzzim, or, God's protectors} {pleasant: Heb. things desired} 39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. 40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north [**The "desolator":**] shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.*

1John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

*Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he **doeth great wonders**, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; **saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.** 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, **that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.***

{This idol is the abomination that brings on the forecast heathen desolator allowed by God}

{The first Beast is the ruthless mighty ruler of the Western Nations at the time.}

{The first Beast is also called the God of Forces in Daniel 11:38.}

{The second Beast is the Man of Sin, called "the king" (of Israel) in Daniel 11:36}