

The Working of Satan

2 Thessalonians 1:10 – 2:9

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~ Are miracles a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives today? Can we – or should we – trust signs, wonders, dreams and visions as indications of God’s present-moment moving and working? Well, this report from our Spiritual Safari in one of the greatest – perhaps *THE* greatest – prophetic sections of Scripture, is going to get down to the nittiest of grittiness as we consider proper, correct and complete answers to those two questions from the Word of God. When we recently examined chapter four of *first* Thessalonians, we learned all about the rapture of the church, the Day of the Lord, the Great Tribulation, and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His Millennial Kingdom. Here, the emphasis is again on the Great Tribulation period – but in a slightly different relation to the rapture. So, if you have not read all sixteen of our previous reports covering these two epistles, I can only suggest you go back and do so now....

I

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

~ As a springboard of background for this study, let me say I understand Scripture to teach this refers to the second advent of Christ as He returns to this earth and establishes His Kingdom. At the rapture Christ, His saints do not come down to the earth – the church goes *UP* to meet Him in the air; as Paul explained in first Thessalonians chapter four verse seventeen. This is when the church goes to be with Christ in the place He has prepared for us in Heaven. Jesus said He was going to prepare a place, and that He would

return and gather us to be with Him forever. That is when the world will enter the Great Tribulation period; and *AFTER THAT* Christ returns to the earth in judgment and glory. At the rapture there is no worldly judgment. This is a consistent, clear message running from the Gospel accounts to the epistles to the messages Jesus spoke to the churches in Revelation....

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

~ Our gathering together unto Him at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ refers to the rapture of the church. Any good Bible with notes will reveal that *"the Day of Christ"* in verse two is an unfortunate translation which should read: *"the Day of the Lord."* The Day of Christ is this present age of grace – which Paul was already a part of. As we have examined many times on this safari, the Day of the Lord is a technical phrase that *ALL* of the prophets use, and it refers to that period beginning with the Great Tribulation period and running through the Millennium. The Day of the Lord begins when the church ends; which would, naturally, follow after the rapture. I do not mean to be tedious by constantly repeating this, but it is *ALL* important to get straight in our thinking of eschatology; or this section of Scripture doesn't even make sense. And because almost the entire remainder of our Spiritual Safari is prophetic.

Remember, the Thessalonian church had received a false report that had allegedly originated with Paul, and which proclaimed the Day of the Lord had already come. That letter was evidently circulating – although I doubt anyone had ever really seen it. Personally, I believe someone claimed to have had a dream or vision of special revelation that no one else could have possibly received, and had just made it all up – as those super duper saints,

who never really study the Word of God, do – because, of course, it’s easier to dream things up as opposed to going to school or actually examining the Bible in an educated manner – but, I digress – and, either way, that would, of course, mean the church in Thessalonica *had* missed the rapture, and were now left with no hope; and that their looking for the Lord Jesus Christ to take them to be with Him was futile. That’s a mouthful and, my friends, is *PRECISELY* why those who deny the rapture want to constantly argue about it. The rapture is the most controversial aspect of prophecy – and rapture deniers have but *ONE* objective: to destroy your hope in Christ. There is literally *NO OTHER REASON* for anyone denying what the Bible clearly teaches....

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who 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.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

~ This church in Thessalonica was experiencing terrible persecutions from Rome, and it was easy to believe they had missed the rapture and were already in the Great Tribulation period. So, Paul reminds them of two signs that *MUST* occur before the Day of the Lord would begin: (1) a falling away – which means a *total and complete* apostasy – but also means more than that. It is the translation of the Greek word “*apostasia*” – which means “*removal from.*” There are two types of removal: (a) a departure from the faith by the organized church, which is called that great harlot in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation when (b) the true and living church has been removed and departs as it was caught up to meet the Lord in the air. One leads to the other. The organized church will rejoice and be very happy this Spiritual Safari – and all teaching of sound doctrine – will be gone and finished on the earth *in that day*, and their deceived condition becomes worse and worse. Remember, the church in Laodicea was in that condition;

and I think we may be in the same period today (2) the revelation of the man of sin – or the Lawless one. We can further round that out with the prophecy of Joel, which says, “... *the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon turned into blood.*” Even further, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter said the Day of the Lord would be marked by the pouring out of the Spirit upon *all* flesh. Well, those things clearly didn’t happen. The Spirit of God was poured out upon *SOME* flesh – but not *ALL* flesh; and, of course, the sun and the moon are still in the sky as I type this report and as you read it.

So, while this report is waxing much more theological than we normally do on safari, it is important because by this we can know very definitely that Paul has us on the right track. The Lawless one is the final representative of man in his open and abject disobedience and rebellion against God. The Lawless one actually assumes the place of God Almighty; and this is the “*little horn*” spoken of by Daniel the prophet in chapter seven of his prophecy. Most interestingly, Paul had covered *ALL* of this and taught these baby Christians deep eschatological truths in a very brief period of time – only three Sabbaths – less than a month – while he was with them before he was run out of town on a rail.

Alright, let’s recapitulate quickly before we move along. The order of events regarding the “*Day of the Lord*” are as follows: (1) the working of the mystery of lawlessness under divine restraint, which had already begun in the apostle’s time (2) the apostasy of the professing church (3) the removal of that which restrains the mystery of lawlessness. The Restrainer is a Person – “*He*” – and, since a mystery always has an element of supernatural implication, this Person can be none other than the Holy Spirit in the church, Who is called back up, out of the way (4) the manifestation of the Lawless one (5) the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and the final destruction of the Lawless one; and (6) the Day of Jehovah. Now, I will be happy to provide all the Scriptural references for those who ask, but I am not including them in this shorter than usual safari report, because it boggles the mind. You’re welcome....

6 And now ye know that which restrains that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now hinders will hinder, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Lawless man be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders ~

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