

Apologetics

The Man Of Sin

(II Th 2:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "Apologetics."
 - a. We are going to bring this series to an end tonight with this last sermon "The Man Of Sin."
3. The Man of Sin/Antichrist controversy.
 - a. Many, Premillennialist, hold to the idea that there will be a "person" or in a couple of cases two people that will come and be the antichrist.
 - b. This will be a sign that Christ is coming to establish His earthly kingdom (II Th 2:3-4, 8).
 - i. "The second event that must take place before the day of the Lord is the revelation of the "man of lawlessness," the Antichrist. As a matter of fact, he is revealed as the day of the Lord begins." (Keep On Keeping On! by Fickett, Harold L. Jr. pg. 133)
 - ii. "2 Thess. 2:1-3 tells us that the son of perdition will be revealed before we are gathered together on the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord occurs at the second coming after the tribulation." (<http://tinyurl.com/3u8jk27>)
 - c. This Antichrist will have a 3 1/2 to 7 year reign of destruction before being killed by Christ and Christ ruling for a 1000 years.
4. We already studied & determined that Premillennialism is a false doctrine formulated by man rather than God (see Premillennialism outline at <http://tinyurl.com/3qq7lb4>).
5. So let us examine the topic of "the man of sin."

I. What The Lawless One Is

- A. Are the man of sin/lawless one and the antichrist the same?
 1. You would be hard pressed to find many to suggest that the man of sin in **I Th 2:1-12** is not the antichrist.
 - i. "If a group of **competent** Bible scholars were commissioned to make a list of the most significant prophetic sections in the Word of God, you can rest assured that high on that list would be 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. As we peruse this passage carefully we discover that in it Paul is pointing out four significant truths: (1) the Thessalonian Christians were being victimized by false teachers who did not understand prophecy; (2) the coming of the day of the Lord will be marked by two major events; (3) the **coming Antichrist** is a very unsavory character; (4) the Temple in Jerusalem has to be rebuilt before Christ returns to earth." (Keep On Keeping On! by Flickett, Harold L. Jr. pg. 129) (emphasis mine)
 - a. Mr. Flickett is a millennialist obviously.
 2. However there is ample reason to suggest they are not the same thing. This will be presented later on.

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- B. Let us examine the characteristics of the lawless one or man of sin
1. He is to bring about a "falling away" or "rebellion" ie "apostasy." (3)
 - i. The Greek word here is "ἀποστασία" or "apō-sta-sē-a"
 - a. "to rise up in open defiance of authority, with the presumed intention to overthrow it or to act in complete opposition to its demands" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (495). New York: United Bible societies.)
 - b. "a falling away, defection, apostasy; in the Bible sc. from the true religion" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (67). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 - ii. In other words there will be a movement to longer follow Christ & His Word.
 - a. There is a definite article in front of apostasy meaning literally "the apostasy."
 - b. This shows that the rebellion was not a principle of defection from Christ but a movement.
 2. He was not yet fully revealed. (3)
 - i. As we will see he was in the process of being revealed already but was not formed in such a way as to make himself known to the young saints at this time.
 3. He is the "man of sin or lawless one." (3, 8)
 - i. This shows his character. He has no desire to obey God's Word hence lawlessness.
 - a. **I Jn 3:4** "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."¹
 4. He is the son of perdition or destruction. (3)
 - i. This shows his eventual ending (vs 8) destruction by Christ.
 5. He exalts himself and presents himself as God. (4)
 - i. Though he tries to "look like God" he is nothing like God. He goes against God at every turn.
 - ii. Satan is good at this.
 - a. **II Co 11:14** "And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." (ESV)
 6. He will sit in the temple of God. (4)
 - i. This cannot be the Jewish temple for a few reasons.
 - a. First the Greek word for temple here is "ναός" or "nō-ōn"
 1. Paul uses it eight times and never once does he use it to refer to the Jewish temple.
 - b. Second there is not one time that the phrase "temple of God" is used after Christ's death to refer to the Jewish temple.
 - ii. This is not unusual symbolic language either found in the Bible.
 - a. **Is 14:13-14; Ek 28:2**
 1. Here we find similar symbolic not literal language.

¹ All scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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- ii. The temple of God "is" used to refer to the church however.
 - a. **II Co 6:16** "And what agreement has the **temple of God** with idols? For **you are the temple of the living God**. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." (emphasis mine)
 - b. **I Co 3:16** "Do you not know that **you are the temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"
- 7. He is a deceiver through lying wonders. (9-10)
 - i. Notice it is never said that he will perform legitimate miracles.
 - a. Lenski had this to say, "So many are ready to attribute real miracles to Satan and to his agents; the Scriptures never do." (<http://tinyurl.com/3fgezg7>)
 - b. The Message translates verse 9 as "The Anarchist's coming is all Satan's work. All his power and signs and miracles are fake" (Though a horrible translation usually, the commentary is accurate here minus the fact it is not talking about the antichrist.)
 - ii. Just because someone or group does "wonders" that doesn't mean they are miracles.
 - a. Also remember that this one is going to be around when Christ comes back (8) and considering miracles have ceased (**I Co 13:9-10; Ja 1:25**) this cannot be miracles.
- 8. He was "already at work" during the writing of this letter. (7)
 - i. The Greek "is...at work" is a present, middle, indicative, third person, singular, verb.
 - a. With this verb being in the present, middle, indicative it literally means that this work was "really," not metaphorically, "working its self towards a greater goal." (Ibid)
 - ii. Thus what we see is an infant stage maturing and developing. He was already at work but had not accomplished his goal.
- 9. He was being restrained. (6)
 - i. The Thessalonica saints "knew" who the restrainer was, notice "you know..."
 - ii. This alludes as well to the present working of the lawless one at the time of this letter.
- 10. He would eventually be free from the restraint of him who was restraining. (6-7)
 - i. The restraint would simply "be gone." This is the literal meaning.
 - ii. He would be free to thrive.
- 11. He would survive from at least the time Paul is writing (6) until the Second Coming of Christ. (8)
 - i. At this point he would be destroyed by Christ.

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II. What The Man of Sin Is Not

- A. Some have suggested that this man of sin is "Satan himself."
 - 1. However this can be easily seen as false in **II Th 2:9**. Satan is seen as bringing about this antichrist and not being the antichrist.
- B. Some have suggested that the man of sin is simply evil personified
 - 1. However notice that the language here does not add up to such a suggestion.
 - i. First we see that it will be "the" man of sin. This points more to a definite influence rather than a generic one.
 - ii. Second there would be "the" falling away. Once again pointing to a definite fall rather than a generic one.
- C. Some have suggested that the lawless one is going to be a person or two people.
 - 1. The fact that the man of sin is already at work **II Th 2:7** and will not stop until the Second Coming of Christ shows that it will not be any singular human being or two for that matter.
 - i. Unless there is a very old man or two out there right now this simply does not add up to the Word and what we have seen.
- D. Some have suggested that the lawless one or man of sin is the antichrist
 - 1. I would suggest that the two are separate at least as far as the Word of God is concerned.
 - 2. The lawless one is already seen as a particular or unique thing.
 - i. "The" man of sin.
 - ii. "The" falling away.
 - 3. The antichrists as discussed by John inspired by God, are **any** that "deny the Father and the Son" (**I Jn 2:22**).
 - i. Notice there are many antichrists.
 - a. **I Jn 2:18** "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour." (ESV)
 - b. **I Jn 4:3** "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already." (ESV)
 - c. **II Jn 7** "For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

III. Who Is The Lawless One Then

- A. The lawless one is...the Roman Catholic Papacy
 - 1. Notice that "falling away" that occurred under Catholicism.
 - i. Slowly over time in the 1st century you had a gradual decline in sound doctrine being adhered to.
 - ii. Before the official power of the pope in 606 notice some of the departures.
 - a. Monarchical bishops, infant baptism, human creeds, a state religion, forgiveness of sins through priests, corruption of the Lord's Supper and others.

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- iii. After the official power was given to the pope in 606 notice the departures.
 - a. The errors of indulgence, worship of images, purgatory, enforced celibacy, the immaculate conception of Mary, the infallibility of the pope when said to be the Vicar of Christ.
 1. Did you see that the Bible is never mentioned.
 - iv. Some say it can't be the papacy because it says "man" singular. First remember he or it is seen in the neuter and masculine. Second the Bible has in the past used the singular to imply the plural.
 - a. **I Pt 2:17** "Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."
 1. Were they only to honor the present king or all kings?
 - b. **Mt 5:25** "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison."
 1. Are we only to come to an agreement with one adversary and then be done?
2. Notice the opposing of God and the exalting of one's self into the temple of God even calling himself God under Catholicism.
 - i. "It is the claim of the papacy to have supreme authority to decide for men what they must believe, or suffer eternal punishment. He claims to have power to forgive sins, and even to have power over the souls of the dead." (2 Thessalonians Notes by Parrish, Eddie pg. 40)
 - a. In the Catholic Encyclopedia under Jurisdictional rights and prerogatives of the pope is says, "it is his to set forth creeds, and to determine when and by whom an explicit profession of faith shall be made" (<http://tinyurl.com/6ta62>)
 - ii. "The Pope, a.k.a Papa, Vicar of Christ, Vicar of Peter, **Holy Father**, Bishop of Rome, Servant of the servants of God, **Supreme Pastor**, **His Holiness**, **The Rock**, Supreme Pontiff, **Father of Kings**, Governor of the World, Successor of St. Peter, Shepherd of the Universal Church, etc." (<http://tinyurl.com/3bh6d34>)
 - a. The papacy exalts itself to that of deity.
 - b. As the "Vicar of Christ" the pope is the substitute for Christ.
 - iii. If there was anyone that was figuratively sitting on the throne of God...
 3. Notice that once the restraints were lifted Catholicism thrived.
 - i. There was a very slow departure up to the point of Constantine becoming emperor of Rome.
 - ii. With the end of Roman persecution there was a surge in departures.
 - iii. With the fall of the Roman empire Catholicism became the next "empire."
 - iv. Thus the Roman empire was that which restrained the lawless one from maturing quicker and the empire was "known" to the saints at that time.

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4. Notice the many wonders and lying done under Catholicism.
 - i. The history of Catholicism is flooded with these types of supposed wonders.
 - ii. A Catholic apologist Conway stated, "[God] has allowed His saints to work miracles to prove their divine commission to speak in His name, and to give the world a clear proof of their eminent sanctity. The Church always requires four, or in some instances six, miracles before she proceeds to beatify or canonize a saint." (<http://tinyurl.com/3fgezg7>)
- B. We could continue but why do so...
 1. This is sufficient to show that the lawless one fits perfectly with that which we see in **II Th 2:1-12**.

CONCLUSION

1. There is no way to stop the many false doctrines that continually crop up day after day such as what Harold Fickett a Premillennialist stated in his book *Keep On Keeping On* about the time of the "falling away" that will proceed the Second Coming, "Christianity will become a more and more minority movement." (A Bible Commentary for Laymen 1& 2Thessalonians *Keep On Keeping On!* by Fickett, Harold L. Jr. pg. 132)
 - a. Think about in light of scripture, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (**Mt 7:13-14**)
 - b. True Christianity has always been the minority!!!
2. We are required however to know the Word of God enough so that we can defend it and ourselves against the false doctrines and teachers.
 - a. **I Pt 3:15; Jd 3**
3. Let it never be said of anyone here that they are the antichrist...those against Christ but rather that they be Christian...Christ-like.
4. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**