



## A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

### Week 22: Understanding the Rise of the Antichrist, Part 4

September 25, 2022

Instructor: Steve Schmutzer

#### Review:

- We are studying the rise of the antichrist, and we will continue this focus for a few more lessons.
- More specifically, we are studying what the conditions of the world will be at this future point, as the antichrist will gain political prestige and “confirm a covenant” with the nation of Israel.
- This “confirming of the covenant” will be the trigger point that begins the seven-year Tribulation.
- We’ve seen how events in the world leading up to that moment will be chaotic, murderous, lawless, and altogether very dangerous times.
- A worldwide campaign of genocide will be directed at anyone who does not conform to the thinking patterns and ‘religious deception’ of that future post-Rapture time.
- Israel will enter into this covenant with the antichrist because, by so doing, she will believe that she will be INSULATED from these murderous global dynamics.
- As well, Israel will believe that she can gain her temple INSTITUTION through the terms of this covenant.
- Israel will be eager to restart her sacrificial systems, engage in her own religious protocols, and avoid the pressure to participate in the emerging one-world false religious system.
- We saw by comparing and studying certain texts in **Revelation 6, Isaiah 28, and Dan. 9**, that several key points emerge:
  - There is mention of the ratification and annulment of a future covenant.
  - This covenant is made with Death and Hades who are also responsible for perpetrating an “overflowing scourge” on the earth
  - This covenant is made with boastful and scoffing Jewish leaders that rule Jerusalem at that time.
  - This covenant is confirmed by the antichrist.
  - This covenant ends up being a lie – a deception.

**NOTE:** This basically summarizes where we are and what we’ve learned. Now, we are about to enter a very challenging and sensitive part of our study. This necessitates a little repetition and some new information as well.

- The Bible teaches that there will be a global false religious system (**Cf. Revelation Ch. 17**)
- The Bible also teaches that this global false religious system is going to emerge and have a prominent role in the post-Rapture timeframe. We've seen some of this Scriptural support already and we will see more.
- And all this makes perfect sense.
- Now, I have a lot to deal with and to explain as we tackle this subject. Let's look at this logically. I have several points I want to underscore here in order to lay some foundation, particularly as we seek to determine the nature and origins of this future one-world religious system:

## I. THE ROLE OF THE FUTURE ONE WORLD RELIGION.

A. First Point: Someone is going to have to explain why millions of Christians just disappeared.

NOTE: This will probably be an event which masses of unsaved humanity watch.

1. **1 Corinthians 15:52** tells us that we will be "changed in a flash – in the twinkling of an eye." It goes on to tell us that our mortal bodies will be made immortal.
2. What **1 Corinthians 15:52** does NOT explicitly tell us is that we will disappear in the Rapture in a flash. That's the conventional teaching, but I see no place in Scripture where that is stated.
3. In fact, in the types of the Rapture (Elijah getting caught up to heaven / Jesus' own ascension to heaven at the end of His earthly ministry / the two witnesses in **Revelation**), those who were "taken up" did not disappear in the twinkling of an eye.
4. Rather, they ascended in a way that others were able to witness. It seems likely to me that this is the way the Rapture of the Church will take place.
5. Our bodies are changed into a glorified form in a flash, but the ascension part is witnessed by all of humanity which remains.
6. Regardless, an explanation for the church being taken out of the world will be needed for those who are left behind.

B. Second Point: Remember also, it's the folks that *already* refused to believe the truth that get left behind.

1. Many of these people will have plainly heard the gospel and perhaps even something about the Rapture.
2. According to **Romans Ch. 1**, they've also had the evidence of "God's eternal power and divine nature" in the testimony of Creation, and **verse 20 of that chapter** says this group is: "without excuse."
  - a. The bottom line is all those who have been presented with God's offer of salvation and have refused it will be in a bad spot. **2 Thessalonians 2:12** says "...all will be condemned who have not believed the truth...."

- b. Many people will also deny what has happened even after God miraculously removes His Church from the Earth. This level of self-delusion is not hard to understand:
    - We live in times when people believe men can get pregnant, that killing babies up to the point of birth is not infanticide, and that we have a legitimately-elected President in office.
    - We are seeing numerous examples in our own time of willful self-delusion.
  - c. For people who willfully persist in these types of choices and delusions, an “alternate explanation” for the Rapture will be embraced and promoted.
    - We see a pattern already of basic and obvious truth being unwelcome. Any explanation “but the right one” is supported.
    - So, this future posture is not hard to imagine. It’s just more of what we see right now.
    - This lie, this “alternate explanation” for the Rapture, will seem reasonable to depraved minds and darkened hearts.
    - In other words, whatever premise is put out there to deceive people or whatever lie is propagated, it will be persuasive.
- C. The immediate post-Rapture timeframe is a perfect time for the great deception mentioned in *2 Thessalonians 2:9-12*.
1. The obvious points of *2 Thessalonians* conform well to this premise. In the wake of the supernatural removal of the church, another supernatural lie will be displayed.
  2. This has been the pattern before:
    - a. When Moses and Aaron turned their staffs into snakes, the occultic counselors to Pharaoh did the same thing.
    - b. Moses’ and Aaron’s snakes prevailed in that situation, however, the point is made that Satan has always tried to imitate the truth while carrying out his own deceptive agenda.
  3. I believe Satan will enact a comprehensive plan to fool the masses in the immediate wake of the Rapture. He will foist the biggest lie on the world that humanity has ever encountered.
  4. I believe timing will be important. A vacuum will be created in the aftermath of the Rapture.
  5. The restraining power of the Holy Spirit through His church will be removed according to *2 Thessalonians 2:7*, and ultimate lawlessness will be unleashed.
  6. Backing that lawlessness will be a great lie that seems on the surface to have a veneer of truth. The unsaved masses will quickly choose to believe it.
  7. It will make sense to them the same way such folks believe boys can have periods. They have already rejected the obvious truth, and because they fundamentally have rejected God and His laws, they will WANT to believe a lie instead.

- a. Also, as “seeing is believing” has always been the standard by which most people are persuaded, I believe this great lie will be one which is heard *and* seen.
- b. In other words, whatever premise Satan puts out there to deceive people, whatever lie He propagates, it is going to be backed by visible so-called “evidence,” by counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders.
- c. It’ll be a lot like the actions of Pharaoh’s occultic counselors. There will be supernatural signs.
- d. People will be looking for answers to their questions, and Satan will have a powerful delusion for them to embrace.

**NOTE:** I’ve briefly mentioned this before, but we have new folks in this class since I last did so. The unsaved world is already being prepped for this great lie which follows the removal of the church from the earth.

In his book, “Corrupting the Image,” Douglas Hamp notes that many people in the new-age movement and in other aspects of the occult have been receiving messages from “aliens and entities from other galaxies” concerning what will soon be taking place on the Earth.

- D. There are five points that are common in these various messages that are being received. I’ll follow each one with a brief comment from the Biblical perspective:
  1. **Cataclysmic events will come upon the earth** – *the Biblical view is these are the events and judgments of the post-Rapture world and of The Tribulation.*
  2. **They (these aliens) will help us overcome those events** – *the Biblical view is no one can overcome these events. It’s “the day of the Lord” and He will have His way.*
  3. **They (the “aliens” – AKA fallen angels) will remove those that can’t or won’t evolve to the next level** – *this is their slant on the Biblical Rapture; they are going to say they did it*
  4. **Those that remain behind will get to evolve to the next level** – *this is not the Biblical view. While fallen angels might teach that those that remain are the privileged and better ones, the Bible calls the ones who are left behind due to their unbelief, “condemned.”*
  5. **A man from among us will be raised up with special powers and knowledge** – *the Biblical view is this person is the antichrist, and yes, he will have special powers and knowledge. He is also supremely evil.*
- E. I believe Satan’s “*miraculous signs and lying wonders*” (vs. 9) will build on current and evolving ideas that the world has embraced.
  1. Let’s be honest, the world you and I live in right now is cozying up to some strange ideas. And I’m not talking about eliminating cars and gassy cows.
  2. These strange ideas have been gathering force, and they now have a lot of support.

3. Support for myriad bizarre notions and ideas is particularly strong wherever God's values are mocked and looked down on.
4. Here are three of these strange ideas which may play a role in this upcoming "powerful delusion" that God will send on a world which has rejected the Gospel (**Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:11**)
  - a. **FIRST, WE ARE NOT ALONE.** Christians already know this. According to the Bible, we are surrounded by "principalities and powers in heavenly places" (**Cf. Ephesians 6:12**).
    - These intelligent entities strive against us and seek to disrupt God's intentions. These are fallen angels and demons, and God's Word is clear that they wish to destroy us.
    - The unredeemed world sees it differently. They are convinced, as we have already seen - that aliens from other planets exist, and one day we will make contact with them.
    - Furthermore, there are many who believe these aliens are a superior race of beings who will infuse humanity with new wisdom and a golden age of enlightenment when they arrive.
    - This all ties into the points I made before from Douglas Hamp's book.
    - Many people already believe these aliens put humans on planet Earth in the first place. It's what such people WANT to believe since they have rejected the truth of a Creator God.
    - This leads to a second idea which is gaining support and energy in the world today....
  - b. **SECOND: WE MUST EVOLVE.** A popular bumper sticker states, "Evolve or die."
    - This is a marketing spin on Darwin's concept of "survival of the fittest," and according to some opinions, this applies to people as well.
    - The heresy of evolution teaches that less capable variants of a particular species are removed through natural selection.
    - They eventually disappear while the stronger and more capable ones remain and adapt to become something different and better.
    - It's easy to see where this could lead. The people that subscribe to Darwin's ideas, and who believe those ideas apply to you and me, are already obsessing over "humanity's next evolutionary leap."
    - It will not be difficult for the proponents of this view (who are left behind when God removes His church) to believe that they are the "fitter and stronger" form of humans since they still remain on earth after the Rapture.

- As I've said before, it was all those fuddy duddy Christians that were removed. It was all those deplorables that were taken away.
- It was those hateful and spiteful conservatives and narrow-minded nationalists that refused to believe in the virtues of globalism and wokeness that were axed.
- TRUST ME, these hateful attitudes are taking deep root today! We are even hearing murderous language from our own leaders.
- You get the point, the ones that are left behind are going to see themselves as privileged, as better, as more equipped to save the planet and move humanity into a new golden age.

c. **THIRD: WE MUST BE RESCUED FROM OURSELVES.**

- This is the deep-seated fixation among secularists that we are doomed to destroy ourselves unless there is outside intervention.
- Christians RIGHTLY say, "This is true. We need Jesus Christ. He came to die for sinners (**Romans 5:8**) and to deliver people from the righteous wrath of God.
- As believers, we know that Jesus gives us eternal hope outside the bounds of this fallen world and beyond a creation that groans under the effects of sin (**Romans 8:22**)."
- But the unregenerate world doesn't believe in Jesus Christ any way, shape, or form—remember? They choose a spin which places duty into their own hands.
- This is why the deluded socialists and the unsaved world are the biggest proponents of global warming, population reduction, carbon credits, re-useable grocery bags, cloth diapers, and bicycles.
- A few of those things are good in their own way, however, the common thread underlying the passions of the globalism community goes something like this: "We are destroying our planet, and humanity is threatened with extinction. Unless something radically changes, we're toast."
- You see, the unregenerate world is prepping for a hero. They want a savior, but not one "acquainted with grief" (**Cf. Isaiah 53:3**).
- They don't want God's only Son, Jesus Christ, who was sent into this fallen world so that we might live through Him (**Cf. 1 John 4:9**).
- Instead, they want flash and dash, they want a lot of muscle and hustle. They want aliens and a return of the titans, the super-humans, and the "gods" of myth and legend.

- Do you wonder why superhero movies dominate the box office these days, and have for the last couple of decades?
- From Captain America to X-Men, and from Wonder Woman to Guardians of the Galaxy, the masses are being subtly indoctrinated to the idea that we need a champion. We need “superheroes” who will come to this planet to save the world.

5. This is **exactly** the message that occultic leaders are receiving.

- a. Well-known new age writer, Thelma Terrell, is one such case-in-point. There are many others besides her, but let’s discuss Thelma for a moment. She wrote a book called “Project World Evacuation.”
- b. Thelma Terrell claims to have received multiple messages from an entity called Ashtar. She writes that Ashtar is the leader of an “alien confederation,” and the messages concern “the evacuation of millions of people around the globe.”
- c. (PAUSE: “Ashtar.” You might perceive already that there is something significant about that name. Ashtar is awfully close to other names from Biblical times (Asherah/Ashtoreth).
- d. Thelma Terrell says Ashtar has a message that modern man needs to hear. Ashtoreth may have been worshipped as an idol in Biblical times, but Ashtar is back as an “alien” to warn the global citizens of earth of the imminent departure of millions of people.
- e. She obviously does not discuss the true reason for the snatching away of the Church.
  - What does become clear in Thelma Terrell’s writings is this: When the Rapture DOES occur, the “alien” realm will be ready because they have been warning people of just such an event.
  - This ties in perfectly to Douglas Hamp’s comments of messages multiple occultic leaders have been receiving.
  - Ashtar has allegedly communicated to Thelma Terrell that, *“Earth changes will be the primary factor in mass evacuation of this planet.”*
  - In other words, this disappearance of millions of Christians is really all about climate change and the need for the planet to heal.
  - *Therefore*, because of the impending events coming upon the earth, the “alien” ships will come in close enough to lift people off the earth, “in the twinkling of an eye,” Note that even the terminology is borrowed from the Bible concerning the Rapture.

- Thelma Terrell dictated what she was told by Ashtar, and this is what she was told:

*“Our rescue ships will be able to come in close enough in the twinkling of an eye to set the lifting beams in operation in a moment. And all over the globe where events warrant it, this will be the method of evacuation. Mankind will be lifted, levitated shall we say, by the beams from our smaller ships. These smaller craft will in turn taxi the persons to the larger ships overhead, higher in the atmosphere, where there is ample space and quarters and supplies for millions of people.”*

*“Phase I of the Great Exodus of souls from the planet will take place at a moment’s notice when it is determined that the inhabitants are in danger. Phase II: This second phase immediately follows the first. The second phase is vital, as we return to earth for the children of all ages and races.”*

NOTE: That last statement is a significant one. The fallen angels are stating their plans to return visibly to earth, and to interact physically with humanity).

- F. The specific nature of this global false religion that will emerge and dominate in the wake of the Rapture. We already know a series of things that we must take into account:
  - 1. It will be a false religion that will advance a great deception and will not tolerate the truth.
  - 2. It will be a false religion that will be genocidal in its efforts to require complete conformity.
  - 3. It will be a false religion that will build on current lies and delusions like socialism, climate change, evolution, global governance, and the return of aliens.
  - 4. It will be a false religion that is supported by visible, supernatural signs and wonders.
  - 5. It will be a false religion that is widespread across the globe.
  - 6. It will be a false religion that seems to advance the truth even as it’s promoting a great lie.
- G. The bottom line is this future one-world religious system:
  - 1. Will spawn the genocidal activities of Death and Hades,
  - 2. which is identified and personified in both **Revelation 6:7-8** as well as **Isaiah 28:15 and 18**, and (c.) which will prompt Israel’s FOCUS to gain INSULATION, and their sacrificial INSTITUTION, is one that is steeped in occultic practices and ancient origins.
    - a. Preparations are underway for it right now, and the foundation has already been laid in many places.



- b. This sort of preparation is not confined to obscure new-age leaders and writers; it has invaded the most prominent people on our planet.
  - c. This future one-world religious system will hate the truth of the Gospel, will hate the Jews, and will hate the Christians.
  - d. Also, according to God's Word, particularly in **Revelation Ch. 17** - this future one-world religious system has shown these all same practices and attitudes before.
- H. This is why now, I want to begin a deep dive into the text of **Revelation Ch. 17**.
- 1. It is in this portion of God's Word that we are divinely-alerted to the qualities and the character of this future false one-world religious system.
  - 2. There are many elements to consider in this text, but they all paint a picture that we need to soberly and objectively consider.
  - 3. The things we will discover will support what we've already learned in previous lessons thus far in this class.
- I. The last tri-feta of judgements before the physical return of Jesus Christ: BACKGROUND AND BASIC POINTS:
- 1. In **Rev. Ch. 17**, John is in the company of one of the seven angels who carried out the final bowl judgments. The angel tells John that he is going to be shown something.
    - a. Specifically, in **vs. 1**, John is going to be shown "*the punishment of the great prostitute.*"
    - b. It is clear from this chapter that this great prostitute is a symbol of this final global one-world religious system, and already the analogy of a prostitute is not a good thing.
    - c. The angel explains in **vs. 2** that this prostitute, this global one-world false religion, has many customers and supporters. It has a strong foundation.
    - d. It's support is found in "the kings of the earth" as well as "the inhabitants of the Earth" (again – in **vs. 2**). So, this is a top-down system that impacts all strata of earth's population.
    - e. Lastly, this one-world false religion, this "prostitute," has "intoxicated" her followers.
    - f. In other words, they are not of sound reason. They have been deceived. They are foolish, and they believe anything but the truth.
  - 2. So John is transported, with this angel, to a desert. This place has no distractions. God wants to make sure John's attentions are focused.
    - a. And it's in this desert that John sees this woman, this "prostitute," this false one-world religious system on full display.
  - 3. John notices several things about this woman right away:
    - a. First, she is sitting on a scarlet beast that is covered with blasphemous names (**vs. 3**). Said another way, this one-world religious system is being supported by this beast, and we know this beast is the antichrist.
    - b. Second, this woman, this false one-world religious system, is lavishly decorated in finery.

- She's clothed in purple and scarlet (which are typically colors and styles representing great power, authority, and prominence).
  - She glitters with pearls, precious stones, and gold (**vs. 4**). There is a lot of pomp and show and razzle and dazzle here, but there is also a great deal of wealth and resources.
  - I would suggest to you that these resources are things which have been accumulated over a great period of time.
  - This prostitute holds a cup in her hands, and it is filled with abominable things. Said another way, she is advancing and offering lies and deceptions.
- c. The Bible makes the clear case that her roots go back a long way.
- In **vs. 5** she traces her origins back to "Babylon the Great."
  - The foundation of this final false one-world religious systems is both ancient AND occultic.
  - Whatever this one-world religious system will be, one thing about it is certain: it is based upon the original deceptions which God Himself had to deal with back at the origins of Babylon.
  - And this single Babylonian source has been the mother, or the SOURCE, of all prostitutes (or all false religions) that have plagued the world and contended with the truth since earliest times.
  - Lastly, down in **vs. 15**, we read that this prostitute has an impact on all the people in the world: "...peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages."
  - The final one-world religion will invade all cultures and societies. It is ecumenical. It has gathered all belief systems under one structure.
  - (NOTE: May I add here that when you see the bumper stickers that form the word "COEXIST" with different religious symbols, or when you hear different denominations and religious leaders calling for interfaith cooperation, you are seeing the early signs of this effort to gather all religions under one banner.)
- d. Now, this beast that this prostitute is riding upon has seven heads and ten horns.
- We don't have to debate what or who the beast is because the angel tells John in **vss. 8-13** that the beast which is supporting this prostitute is, in fact, the antichrist.
  - This conclusion is one that conforms to "a mind with wisdom" (**vs. 9**). It is wisdom that accepts the facts for what they are, and which accepts the explanations of the Scriptures.

- The details of the angel's explanation conform perfectly to multiple other portions of God's Word where we learn specific details about the antichrist and his career.
  - It is also clear from the angel's explanation that the beast is a "he." And we learn.....
  - "He" rules over the entire earth right up to the time of the Lord's return.
  - We also learn "he" wars against Jesus Christ who will in fact conquer him, and...
  - "He" has a structure of governance which is set up into ten parts. He's has 10 kings under him through which "he" controls the world.
  - It's pretty clear from a plain reading of the text that the beast upon which the prostitute rides and is supported is, in fact, the antichrist.
4. The relationship between the prostitute (which is a representation of this final false one-world religion), and the beast (which is the antichrist) is a temporary one. It is an arrangement that serves a purpose only for a time.
- a. In **Revelation 17:16**, we see that the antichrist and his 10 kings actually hate this false one-world religion.
  - b. There may be some sort of political alliance or mutual understanding between the two sides for a period of time, but underneath it all, the antichrist cannot stand the situation.
  - c. At a particular point, the antichrist and his 10 kings will turn on this false one-world religion.
  - d. They may have supported it for a time, but they will eventually discontinue this arrangement. We know from God's Word that this arrangement only lasts for the first half of the Tribulation, 3 ½ years.
  - e. At that juncture, they will utterly destroy it. The graphic details of **vs. 16** suggest it will not be a quiet overthrow. It will be traumatic, violent, and in every way, it will be hostile.
  - f. The one-world false religion that will have emerged immediately in the wake of the Rapture, and will have been supported by the emerging political power of the antichrist, will be suddenly done away with.
5. It is reasonable to conclude that the details of **vs. 16** are most likely to occur at the midpoint of The Tribulation. Why?
- a. According to **Daniel 9:27**, it's in the middle of the Tribulation that he puts an end to Jewish religious practices and sets up self-worship
  - b. According to **Revelation 13:5-8**, the period of time that the inhabitants of the Earth worship the beast is 42 months. That calculates out to 3 ½ years, or the second half of the Tribulation.
  - c. Jesus Himself prophetically warned the Jews about the events of the midpoint of the Tribulation when the antichrist sets up the "abomination of desolation."

- d. These passages are some which make pretty clear that it's at the halfway point of the Tribulation that the antichrist destroys the one-world religion, goes back on the terms of the covenant that he confirmed with Israel, and sets up himself as the only one to be worshipped.