



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES
Week 26: Understanding the Rise of the Antichrist, Part 8
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Review:

- Over the past few lessons, we have been studying The Rise of the Antichrist.
- Last week we studied **vs. 37 of Daniel Ch. 11** to try to understand the antichrist's religious persuasions - or lack thereof.
- It is this lack of conventional religious or worship structures on the part of the antichrist that is the primary theme of the context of **Daniel 11 vss. 36-39**.
- Most specifically, as this part of God's Word lays out, we looked at the antichrist's relationship to other "gods" (small g), to the God of gods, and to any heritage, expression, or commitment to religion.
- Consistently, the view is the same: the antichrist has NO connection to any "gods." He has NO regard for Almighty God, and he has no affections for any religious system that may have been the practices of his own ancestors.
- The one fact we were reminded of several ways, is the antichrist considers himself to be above all "gods," and, in particular, he blasphemes Almighty God in a record manner no one has ever done before
- Last week that we also gave particular attention to the phrase, "he shows no regard for the one desired by women."
- This is a phrase some people use to support the notion that the antichrist is a homosexual.
- Well, he MAY be, but if he is, it's not because this phrase states it as so.
- This phrase, as we learned, is most likely about the tradition and expectation of Jewish women - in that each of them desired to be the mother of the Messiah.
- This phrase needs to be considered as part of this larger context of the antichrist's connections to religion and worship. Again, it's another way of saying he will have ZERO affiliation with anything conventionally religious.

NOTE: Today, we're going to stay in this section of **Dan. Ch. 11**, and we'll see in **vs. 38** that a shift begins.

I. THE EARLY PHASES OF THE ANTICHRIST: His own system of worship established.

A. Let's begin with some high-altitude comments:

1. There is the opening phrase "Instead of them...." (Question: "Instead of what?")
 - a. Instead of every other "god?"
 - b. Instead of the God of gods?
 - c. Instead of the gods of his ancestors or their prior systems of ritual and worship?
 - d. Instead of the One True Messiah?
 - e. Instead of any other type or form of "god" that mankind may have set up.

- f. Instead of ALL THOSE, the antichrist will do something else.
 - g. So, this opening phrase, “Instead of them” is a statement of very important contrast.
 - h. The reason these verses in *Daniel* have the repetition they show of the antichrist having NO connection to any conventional worship systems or deities, is to ensure this contrast we now encounter in *Daniel 11:38*.
2. The divinely-inspired thrust of this verse and the surrounding context is the antichrist will do **something totally different**.
- a. He will take a path that has not been taken the same way before.
 - b. The antichrist will set up something unique, when it comes to giving respect to a higher being.
 - c. The antichrist will be so devoted to a different system of honor and worship - that it will become something he is known for, in a way nobody else had been known.
 - d.and what is that?
- B. (vs. 38 continues) “...he will honor a god of fortresses.” (NOTE: a couple of translations use the word “forces” instead).
1. So naturally, the big question here is: “What is this god of fortresses?”
 - a. Going back to the Vulgate (the original Latin translation of the Bible [4th Century]) and to some of the earlier, more literal translations, the statement should read more like the following: “*In his estate, he will honor the god of forces*” (This rendering is supported by the Hebrew interpretation).
 - b. So, the conclusion is, within the antichrist’s resources, within his means and riches, he will honor a god of force or strength
 - c. It would be easy to write this statement off as some sort of allegory, but again, the Hebrew language is specific:
 - The “god” (small g) that the antichrist gives honor to here is a masculine singular construct.
 - It suggests this is not some sort of colloquialism or idiom, but instead, it means exactly what it says.
 - “The antichrist has identified, and he has directly associated with, some sort of figure or individual that is known for being strong and forceful. It is to this figure that the antichrist gives honor.”
 2. So back to our question, “*Who or what is this god of forces or fortresses?*”
 - a. Well, we can rule out every option that was listed in *vss. 36 and 37*, because this “god of fortresses” is designated as being “instead of those.”
 - b. So, it’s not traditional idols or pagan gods. It’s not the God of gods. It’s not any sort of religious system of prior times, and it’s not any normal affection that is established in humanity or culture.
 - c. It’s different than all of that, and yet it is noted to be a masculine entity that is also, among other things, a “god of forces.”

- d. It is to this figure that the antichrist gives great honor. He uses his estate and his resources to do exactly that.
3. I want to rule out one other option here, and that is that this phrase “a god of fortresses” is somehow a personification of war and conflict.
 - a. Back in Proverbs, wisdom is personified.
 - b. Wisdom is not a person or an individual, but in Proverbs wisdom is referred to with female pronouns like “she” and “her”
 - For example “she raises her voice in the public square” (**Proverbs 1:20**)
 - Or “Esteem her, and she will exalt you...” (**Proverbs 4:8**)
 - c. More recently in our lessons, we saw how Death and Hades were also personified the same way: they were given the attributes of a person to better explain their virtues.
 - d. Some commentators think that same dynamic is happening here in **Daniel 11:38**
 - e. They argue that this phrase “a god of fortresses or forces” is a personification of war.
 - Their argument is basically that the antichrist honors military strength and might above all else.
 - That’s a “tough sell” in my opinion. We have to consider all the other passages about the antichrist before we make that conclusion. When we do that, this interpretation seems faulty at best.
 - Let’s remember that the antichrist is a “false Messiah.” That’s the larger meaning of ANTI-Christ. It’s the idea of “instead of Christ.” There is the AGAINST-Christ element as well, however in the original language, that takes on a secondary emphasis.
 - This antichrist rises to power as a political mastermind, not as a military genius.
 - He will also suffer several military setbacks as we will soon learn. So again, making the case that “god of fortresses” is a personification of war is a tough sell.
 - However, that notion is all but totally squashed in **vs. 39** which is the next verse. It says he will “attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god.”
 - So, **vs. 39** clearly establishes this “god” as being someone that can give aid to the antichrist. This is not a personification, it is an actual physical entity.
- C. I want to give you some of my thoughts to the question, “Who or what is this god of fortresses?” Let’s glance at the rest of vs. 38 before I do that:
 1. A supplementary thought to everything we’ve just discussed is contained in the next phrase - - “...a god unknown to his fathers.”
 - a. This is another phrase which discounts the idea of personification.

- b. Here, this “god of fortresses” that the antichrist will honor is one that was unfamiliar to any of his ancestors.
 - c. It is unlikely that his forefathers personified war or acted in any way to support that idea.
 - d. Rather, it is most likely that the antichrist’s forefathers worshipped entities, other “gods” (small g) and so on.
 - e. This statement says that whatever those other gods may have been to his ancestors, this one, the one the antichrist serves, would be unfamiliar or unknown to them....
2. **Daniel 11:38** closes out by emphasizing what we had briefly mentioned earlier: The antichrist will honor this god of fortresses by giving him “*gold and silver, precious stones, and costly gifts.*”
- a. The larger takeaway here is this “god of fortresses,” this god “unknown by the antichrist’s forefathers,” will be given huge gifts and valuables.
 - b. They may actually be gold and silver, precious gems, etc. However, I think the more accurate idea is the antichrist will lavish extraordinary sums of money and resources on this “god of forces.”
 - c. So, whatever, or whomever, this “god” is that the antichrist does give honor to, somehow the gesture of giving costly gifts and valuable resources to it is relevant and meaningful.

Let’s begin to bring this whole picture into sharp focus. Let’s review some of the items we’ve already learned to help us do that. It will be a process of elimination:

1. This “god of fortresses” is someone or something that can help the antichrist in his military pursuits.
2. It is an entity designated with the masculine “he” by the Hebrew definition.
3. It is something or someone unfamiliar with the antichrist’s family lineage.
4. It is something or someone that is not of the established or conventional “gods” (small g) of earlier times.
5. It is something or someone that has not previously had any sort of worship system directly constructed around it / him.
6. It is definitely NOT the God of gods, our own Almighty God.
7. It is not something or someone that has had any sort of traditional or cultural affections.
8. It is something or someone that DOES have an agenda of force and control.
9. It is something or someone that can appreciate and acknowledge receiving costly gifts and valuable resources.
10. It is something or someone that requires an entirely new way of thinking about worship and religious systems.
11. It is something or someone that is considered “foreign” (**see vs. 39**). NOTE: It is significant that several translations use the word “strange” as in some sort of god that is unusual or unique - nothing that’s been seen before.

- d. When we consider that list of criteria, a lot of dead wood is cut out and thrown away. The window of possibilities gets very small.

IMPORTANT: (Don't default to saying, "It's Satan" - - of course he's behind it all). He's been behind all the false religious systems and all the "other gods" (small g) up to this point. However, Satan is not the subject matter here....

II. 2 Thessalonians 2:11 – UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF THE DELUSION SURROUNDING THE ANTI-CHRIST: “For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie”

- A. The context immediately AROUND **2 Thessalonians 2:11** is directed to “the man of lawlessness,” (AKA, the antichrist). More specifically, the points about his debut and his deception are emphasized. This verse makes several things clear:
 1. It's a powerful delusion that convinces those who have already rejected the truth
 2. It is “sent” (or “permitted”) by Almighty God
 3. It is “THE lie” (It is a strategically-promoted message that looms large over all other lesser lies).
 4. It is not “A lie,” but THE lie. It is a strategically promoted message that seeks to erode Biblical core truths.
 5. It is in all respects a deliberate “deception” (Despite its claims and its campaigns, it is not the truth. Instead, it advances a ‘delusion,’ something convincing that is actually not what it seems to be.
 6. It comes in accordance with ‘*counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders*’ (**Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9**).
 7. So, among other things, the antichrist's rise to power, and THE lie which accompanies his rise to power, is supernaturally reinforced.
 8. Occultic paranormal becomes the normal. Unnatural things and events are regularly seen and witnessed. Unusual phenomena are experienced as a new norm.
 9. That is all to say, the core message of THE LIE seems to be supported by real and ongoing evidence.
 10. Lastly, this is all the work of Satan. Though it is sovereignly permitted by God, it's all, in fact, a plan of the devil.

NOTE: The conclusion, that may have been fuzzy at the start, is now coming into focus:

“The antichrist will honor a god – a god of forces – a foreign and strange god – and a god that is unknown to his ancestors. That ‘god’ (small g) is a conscious, intelligent, and occultic entity that is able to receive and respond to gifts and honor. It is supernaturally evident to all, and it is able to provide assistance to the antichrist's agenda.”

NOTE: I want to make an important point before we go further. **The process of understanding and accepting what God's Word says requires personal wisdom, humility, and common sense.**

B. Here are some basic ways we can stay within the realm of wisdom. Here are some practical hints for exercising common sense and humility when it comes to studying the Bible:

1. Don't try to read into the text something that is not there.

- a. For example, if the message of the Gospel is not in the text, don't twist and mishandle the Scriptures to force that message into it.
- b. Another example: If the Bible says "Israel" – don't manipulate the language to mean "the church," and so on

2. Don't overlook or sidestep what IS there in the text.

- a. If the Bible says fallen angels had illicit sexual relations with human women and produced the Nephilim, then don't engage in linguistic gymnastics to try to say it was descendants of Seth that - for some unfathomable reason - produced massive giants, and so on.

3. Don't question the plainly stated fundamentals of the faith (So many things I could say here, but I have two points of illustration to consider:

- a. #1- God created us supernaturally; He put us here, just as the Bible says.
- b. #2 - The depraved world knows there is an Almighty God who also created them and the heavens and earth.
- c. We therefore need to accept that they have consciously rejected that truth (just like the Bible says they have) and would embrace any lie BUT not the truth).

4. If the plain sense of the Bible makes good sense, don't seek any other sense lest it result in nonsense.

- a. We become no different than fools when we ignore what God's Word is clearly telling us and when we try to pretend it means something other than what it is saying.

5. Understand that this unregenerate and depraved world and the events we see taking place within it are giving us evidence of the truth of God's Word. The Bible predicted everything that we see going on around us. For the purposes of our current discussion, there are three things in particular that it spells out for us to consider:

- a. First, depraved humanity has rejected God so much that they have become hateful towards all rules, principles, laws, values, governing systems, logic, and institutions which find their foundation in God's Word.
- b. Second, depraved humanity CHOOSES to believe any lie which detracts from God's truth. They WANT to embrace any idea which erodes God's values and standards. (It's why the unregenerate world today believes in dozens of gender types, and why they believe in evolution, open borders, etc.)

- c. Thirdly, depraved humanity is being conditioned to become more and more deceived. Over the last year and a half, we've seen millions of people accept medical deception, political deception, educational deception, and so on. This has been an ongoing process - the lemmings are being conditioned for THE lie.
- 6. Lastly, it's not a pretty picture in the church either, and what we see going on there only proves how much we have abandoned these principles of wisdom, humility, and common sense.** For example:
- a. Much of the church today believes heaven and hell are just religious "concepts" and not realities.
 - b. Wide swaths of "Christians" also doubt the virgin birth, believe in evolution, despise Israel, applaud homosexuality, mock Biblical prophecy, fight for abortion rights, promote doctrines of demons, and argue that Jesus Christ was racist.
 - c. Much of the church today has no clue about its real condition. Bluntly, most individual churches today showcase the qualities of Laodicean church of ***Revelation 3:14-22***.
 - d. They think they are red-hot for Jesus Christ, but they are instead lukewarm. They think they have no major problems to deal with, but God sees them as pitiful, naked, and wretched.
 - e. Finally, most churches today have absolutely no grasp of what's coming. Because they have mocked and diminished the prophetic content of God's Word, because they choose to act like their pews are filled with unbelievers and have not responsibly equipped and edified the saints instead, because they emphasize milk instead of meat, and because they have conformed to many of the world's ideas and arguments instead of "renewing their minds," they ACTUALLY belong to the world much more than they realize.

NOTE: When ALL the elements of common sense are laid alongside the truth of God's Word, we arrive at only one option, and it is the same conclusion other passages of God's Word also reinforce in their own way:

III. THERE WILL BE A DRAMATIC AND CONVINCING RETURN OF THE FALLEN ANGELS AND THE NEPHILIM INTO THE SPHERE OF DAILY HUMAN EXPERIENCE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE RAPTURE.

- A. This return will accomplish the following:
 - 1. They will enter the physical affairs of mankind, will disclose themselves openly and without any limitations, and they will communicate directly with the 'earth dwellers' who are left behind.
 - 2. These fallen angels may appear as fantastic and beautiful superhero-type figures, or they may appear as the "grays" or standard alien-type figures we have come to know (or all of this at the same time). It does not really matter as humanity will be fooled by them either way.

3. They will convince, “those who refused to love the truth and so be saved” that the One True God is just a concept and not a reality.
4. They will persuade mankind that God did not create the heavens and the earth, but THEY did instead.
5. They will convince unregenerate humanity, including many who once attended church and thought they were Christians, that they seeded humanity on this earth and that other intelligent lifeforms in other galaxies made this earth, and all that is on it.
6. They will disclose themselves (and their technology) as coming from another galaxy, or “some other place in space.”
7. Because they will claim something to the effect that they put humanity on this earth in far ancient times, they will also claim they removed those Christians who were unable or unwilling to evolve to the next level.
8. The motive for all of this is nothing more than to explain away the Rapture and erode the truth of God’s Word. They cannot allow the facts of what really happened to gain any root.
9. They will promote THE lie and advance a powerful delusion that will deceive many people. In the process, they will assist the rise of the antichrist and show him special favor and assistance.
10. I also feel that a big component of their argument at that time will be the earth needs to 'heal, recover, and enter a new age.' They will say that none of this would be possible with the fuddy-duddy Christians and their influence around.
11. This aligns very well with the 'climate change religion' which has already infected millions of globalist-socialist-progressive-utopianists which blindly and fanatically embrace all this already.
12. What we are seeing already is this dark agenda of Satan that is rearing its head. Humanity is being actively and strategically conditioned right now for exactly everything I have stated here in review:
 - a. The movie and entertainment industry has been pumping out films and stories of superhero figures coming to earth from other dimensions to save humanity from itself.
 - b. The government is now officially stating that UFOs (or UAPs: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena) are real, and are not from this earth.
 - c. The Catholic Church has been funding programs and technology to seek out “alien life” for years now. More recently, the Catholic Church leadership has stated that they expect aliens to show up here very soon. When they do, they will be worked into the practices and rituals of the Catholic faith.
 - d. Over the top of all of this: multiple New Age leaders and so-called gurus are announcing that they are being contacted by their spirit guides who are stating all of this is coming (Not the Biblical perspective, but they are giving their own “spin” on it).
 - e. In other words, every effort is being made, and will continue to be made, by the dark side to skew, discredit, ridicule, dilute, and in every way, put down

the truth of God's Word about what is coming, and what is actually happening when it DOES come.

- B. Again in review for some of you, and new for others which have recently started attending, a few passages of Scripture which support this idea of the return of fallen angels and the re-invasion of the Nephilim):
1. In **Genesis 3:15**, God said there would be enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. That battle continues to exist.
 2. In **Daniel 2:43**, it was prophesied of the very end of times that "they will mingle themselves with the seed of men." The "THEY" here refers to something other than human.
 3. Jesus said in **Matthew 24:37 and in Luke 17:26** "as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." There was something unique about the pre-flood days that will be characteristic of the very end of days as well.
 4. In **Revelation 14:9** it is pronounced by an angel that anyone who takes the mark of the beast is no longer redeemable. It is stated they will burn in hell. The issue is more than a choice; it involves a change.
 5. In **Revelation 19:20**, the antichrist and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of burning sulphur. They appear to be the first occupants of hell, and they bypass the Great White Throne judgement. Reason: They are not human or not FULLY human.

IV. THE PROBLEM OF THE SLEEPING CHURCH

Now, let me start wrapping up by soberly considering what is perhaps the GREATEST tragedy of all these things I am telling you. This is going to be uncomfortable for some of you, however it is also the truth:

- THE CHURCH IS DOING A HORRIBLE JOB PREPARING CHRISTIANS FOR WHAT IS COMING. THE CHURCH IS DOING AN AWFUL JOB OF EQUIPPING THE SAINTS.
- IN FACT, I AM BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONVINCED THAT MUCH OF THE CHURCH WILL BE LEFT BEHIND AFTER THE RAPTURE, AND MANY FORMER CHURCHGOERS WILL BUY INTO THESE LIES AND DECEPTIONS WHEN THEY COME UPON THE EARTH.

- A. As I said, that may make you uncomfortable, but as I also said, it is the truth. Let me remind you of a few things from the Bible that support what I just said:
1. **Matthew 7:22** reminds us that "many" will find out too late that they were NOT Christians, and they did not have the saving faith they thought they did.
 - a. Not "some," but "MANY"
 2. **2 Peter 3:3-4** assures us that in the last days there will be a rise of many false teachers.
 - a. *One of the hallmarks of false teachers* is their mocking and their dilution of Biblical prophecy, even specifically the Rapture (We certainly see a lot of that right now).

3. **2 Timothy 4:3** tells us that we are in a time when much of the church will turn away from sound doctrine -- choosing to focus on themes that will 'suit their own desires.'
 - a. However, I believe, in many cases, these sound like 'good themes' to give attention to.
 - b. But they are milk as opposed to meat, and they do not deal forthrightly with the most urgent needs of the saints.
 - c. This passage tells us the church will locate and will work with those people that will teach what they want to hear instead. This is a deliberate choice.

4. **Jude 10** clarifies that many churches and their false teachers will speak abusively against whatever things they do not understand.
 - a. We are certainly seeing that with many pastors who mock prophetic themes, who refuse to teach them to their congregations.
 - b. In fact, the hard truth is they are "unable to teach" the prophetic Scriptures which comprise more than one quarter of God's Word.
 - c. The reason for their inability is severalfold including pride, lack of gifting, lack of proper reverence for God's Word, or they feel self-righteous for subscribing to another agenda instead.

5. **Revelation 3:17** reminds us of the condition of the modern church today.
 - a. It absolutely does not see its own condition for what it really is.
 - b. It thinks it's in a good spot; it thinks it's doing what it needs to be doing.
 - c. Instead, God calls it "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."

I could say so much more like these things at this point, but it's not ME saying this. It's the Bible that makes this case very clear.

HARD TRUTH: The Bible's position is we cannot take any comfort in the notion that the church is doing the right thing these days. In fact, we find the church on the wrong side of the equation much of the time.

- B. The statistics and the studies bring this out:
 1. According to a study in Christianity Today, only one-third of pastors today believe in the Rapture.
 2. Only half of today's pastors believe the antichrist will eventually come.
 3. Various studies suggest that up to 80% of Christians today believe in some form of Replacement Theology.
 4. According to Lifeway Research, 60% of pastors don't believe in a pre-trib Rapture.
 - a. Within that group are included the following denominations: Lutherans (60 percent), Methodists (48 percent) and Presbyterian/Reformed pastors (49 percent).

5. Almost half of pastors feel that prophetic issues cause division and should not be taught. Let me be very clear: **Such pastors do not regard God's Word as they ought to, and if we accept what the Bible has to say about this, then they disqualify themselves by their attitudes and choices.**
6. Various studies show the more educated a pastor is, the less inclined he is to believe in the Rapture.
7. Pastors under 45 years old are the least likely to believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
8. 39% of all pastors do not believe the antichrist is a literal individual.
9. Only 2 in 5 pastors claim to have preached anything (not a lot - - just "anything") from the book of Revelation.

I could go on and on here. The studies and statistics are numerous and they are alarming to say the least. But the point is made clear. Pastors and churches today – probably MOST of them, in fact - are showing in their own choices the truth of some of these passages I've mentioned.

C. So, on one hand, we see the strategies and deceptions of the dark side accelerating.

1. We see humanity being conditioned even now for a powerful delusion that is coming.
2. We see a surging hatred for God, for God's people, and for God's laws and values.
3. We see mounting fraud and tyranny in politics, and mounting deceptions in education and healthcare.
4. We see Satan's forces are even announcing their deceptive plans through occultic leaders.

D. On the other hand, we see the church falling flat on its face.

1. It is not equipping the saints with the truth about the times in which we live and what is coming.
2. Instead, it is wallowing in its own delusions that it's doing a good job, even as God plainly states, it's wretched and lukewarm.
3. We see church leaders denying Biblical truth, refusing to teach it, emphasizing milk over meat, and even teaching things that are not true.
4. It's no wonder many people who believe they are saved - - are really not!