

FAITH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP of Fairfield Glade
Pastor Dave Evangelista ~ 4.26.09 ~ Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
“God’s Timetable”

The purpose of learning Biblical prophecy is not for us to just make a calendar but to learn to build character in our personal lives. The Apostle Paul emphasized prophecy in both of his letters to the folks at Thessalonica, and our Lord warned us not to set dates for His return to earth. (See Matthew 24: 36 & 42). Put in more casual terms, ‘date-setters’ can be ‘upsetters’—which is exactly what took place in the Thessalonian assembly. The believers had been deceived into thinking they were already living in the “Day of the Lord”. This belief could have erupted from a number of sources such as a prophetic utterance occurring in a meeting, for instance. Then the ‘prophetic utterance’ backed itself up by a letter containing a claim that its author was Paul, the Apostle. Paul then, explained that this was erroneous and sought to calm their hearts and stabilize their Faith emphasizing they were not in “The Day of the Lord”. His reason was really simple to understand: the ‘Day’ could not arrive until certain events took place. Paul went on to state the prophetic events that make up God’s timetable. (See 2 Thess. 2:1-7).

The “Day of the Lord” is a period that follows the Rapture of the Church. Why is Satan unable to reveal his man of sin sooner than the Rapture? Because God is restraining the forces of evil in the world today. Satan cannot do whatever he wants to do, whenever he pleases even though it appears that way in the world around us. In verses 6 & 7, Paul mentioned a restraining force that even today is helping keep everything right on schedule. The Holy Spirit will certainly be present on earth during the “Day of the Lord”. But He will not be restraining the forces of evil as He is today. There is a “Fullness of Time”

for the appearance of the Antichrist and nothing will be off schedule. Once the restraining ministry of the Spirit of God has ended, the next event can take place:

The Revelation of Antichrist. (See 2 Thess. 2:3-5, 8A). Paul did not use the term Antichrist in his letter. This term is used in the New Testament only by John. (See I John 2:18 & 22; I John 4:3; II John 7). The Greek prefix, anti, has two meanings; 1.) *against*; 2.) *instead of*. Satan not only opposes Christ, but He wants to be worshiped and obeyed instead of Christ. Satan will one day produce his masterpiece, the Antichrist who will cause the world to worship Satan and believe Satan’s lies. Students of Biblical prophecy may not agree on every detail; but the main facts, when they are related, give us the following description of Antichrist in the last days. (See Rev. 6: 1, 2).

The first description of the Antichrist is the peace-maker. The Antichrist goes forth to conquer peacefully; he has a bow but no arrows—he will bring a brief time of peace to the world. (See I Thess. 5:1-3)

The second description of the Antichrist is the protector. (See Daniel 9:24-27).

It is important to note several facts. First, the prophecy applies to Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple—not to the Church. Second, it announces the time when Messiah will come and accomplish certain purposes for the Jewish people. The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel to protect her and permit her to rebuild her temple. This covenant will be for seven years. He will temporarily solve the Middle East Crisis.

The third description of the Antichrist is the peace-breaker: After 3½ years, Antichrist will break his covenant

with the Jews and take over their temple. Up to this point, Antichrist has been a peacemaking leader of ten European nations, but now he reveals his true character by taking over the Jewish Temple and demanding that the world worship him. (See Revelation 13). He will organize a world religious system that will, by worshiping him, worship Satan.

The fourth description of the Antichrist is the ***persecutor***. (See Rev. 13:15-17). Satan will vent his wrath against Israel. He will so control the world's economic system that citizens must bear "The Mark of the Beast" to be able to buy and sell (Rev. 13: 16 & 17). People often ask, will anyone be saved during the 7 year period? The answer is a resounding, YES—144,000 Jewish evangelists will accomplish this. However, it will cost one dearly to trust Christ and live for Him during that time.

The fifth description is the ***prisoner***. (See Rev. 19:11-21). Keep in mind that God has a timetable.

The Return of the Lord Jesus (See 2 Thess. 2:8-12). *"They perish because they refused to love the Truth and so, for this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."* It is important for us that we distinguish His *Rapture of the Church* from His *Return to the earth* with his saints. The first event is secret, as the church is caught up to meet Him in the air. The second event is public, *"Every eye shall see Him..."* (Rev. 1:7) when the Church returns with Him to defeat Satan and his hosts.

Our Lord's judgment of the Antichrist: (See 2 Thess. 2: 8 & 9). Satan has always been an imitator. There are false Christians in the world who are really children of the Devil. (See Matt. 13:38 and II Cor. 11:26). Satan can perform miracles that seem to rival those of the Lord. The purpose of God's miracles was to lead

people to the Truth. The purpose of Antichrist's miracles will be to lead people to believe his lies. When our Lord returns, He will judge Antichrist by *"The Spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming."*

Then our Lord's judgment of the unsaved: (See 2 Thess. 2:10-12). Many will die in the terrible judgments that God will send on earth during The Great Tribulation. It is important to note that these people did have opportunity to believe and be saved. In our text, verse 11 reads: *"...that they should believe the lie."* What is the lie? The lie is the idea that man is his own God. Therefore man can do whatever he pleases and better himself by his own human efforts—all of which means that Satan appeals to man's pride. It was pride that turned Lucifer to Satan. No lost sinner can afford to treat God's Truth carelessly or reject God's Son repeatedly. The human heart becomes harder each time the sinner rejects God's Truth and this makes it easier to believe Satan's lies.

Challenge: → how much better it is to follow the example of the Thessalonican believers who received the Word of God, not as the word of man but as it is in Truth, the Word of God! Let us do the same.