Women’s Bible Study

I & II Thessalonians

**Eleventh Study** - II Thessalonians 2:1-5

**“Events Before Christ’s Return”**

Studies I&II Thessalonians Pages 54-58 (using Lesson 12)

Once again, the questions from Rev. Hanko’s Study Guides are in parenthesis after the questions.

All quotes by Wm. Hendrikson are from his New Testament Commentary on I & II Thessalonians

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**Day One\_-\_\_Be Not Soon Shaken or Troubled**

Today we consider Paul’s words to the Thessalonians concerning their misunderstandings.

**II Thessalonians 2:1&2 “ Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,2That 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.” - Study Guide pg 54**

**Read:** II Thessalonians Chapter Two Matthew 25:31-34

**Do:**

1. Read the introduction to Lesson 12 on page 54.

1. What does Paul mean in verse one that he beseeches the brethren in Thessalonica “by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him”?
2. In verse 2, Paul requests that the Thessalonians be not shaken in mind or troubled. What does he say they might be troubled about?

4. From what three sources does he suggest they might be troubled?

 a.

 b.

 c.

Food for thought: “Paul had written about the sudden character of Christ’s (second) coming and about the necessity of being prepared for it (I Thess. 5:1-11). Apparently, this message had been misinterpreted, as if ‘sudden’ coming meant ‘immediate’ coming. Paul had also made known to the Thessalonians what the Lord had revealed to him regarding the ‘gathering together to (meet) him”. He had stressed the impartial character of this great future event: survivors would have no advantage over departed ones. Together the two groups (now united) would ascend to meet the Lord in the air to be with him forever. But though this teaching must have comforted the readers, the comfort had to some extent been offset by the excitement about the ‘imminent’ coming…People were ‘losing their heads’ over it, so that some decided to stop working altogether. They were perturbed because of it, terribly ‘shaken up’… from their normal state of mind…It seems that after I Thessalonians had been read to the assembled congregation, there was no dearth of ‘interpreters.” One individual would be telling everybody about an ‘inspired message’ or ‘prophetic voice’ (spirit) which he had received (or so he thought); another would draw attention to himself by asserting:

 ‘Paul must mean this, for I heard the word from his own lips which he was here with us,’ and a third would circulate the news that ‘someone’ had received a letter from Paul, in which the latter expressed his views in such or such a manner…The substance of all these would-be interpretations… is expressed in the words: to the effect that the day of the Lord has arrived. These excited people were convinced that ‘the day of the Lord’ was here already. A few more days, weeks, or months at the most, and Jesus himself would make his appearance upon the clouds of heaven His ‘day’ had arrived.” Wm. Hendrikson continued….

cont.

 On question three: Paul here adjures the believers (he makes use of an oath) ‘by the coming of Christ’ not to imagine rashly that His day is at hand, for he at the same time admonishes us not to think of it but with reverence and sobriety. For it is customary to adjure by those things which are regarded by us with reverence. The meaning therefore is, "As you set a high value on the coming of Christ, when he will gather us to himself… so I earnestly beseech you by his coming not to be too credulous, should any one affirm, on whatever pretext, that his day is at hand. Calvin – paraphrased from his commentary on I Thessalonians

# To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:1&2

**“Show me Thy paths, O Lord, teach me Thy perfect way,**

 **O guide me in Thy truth divine and lead me day by day.”** Psalter #60 st. 3

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#  Day Two\_-\_\_That Day Shall Not Come Except…

Today we begin to look at the first thing Paul writes must come before Christ’s return.

# II Thessalonians 2:3 “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;” - Study Guide page 55

**Read:** II Thess. Chapter 2:1-5 Matt. 24:10-13 I Tim. 4:1-3 II Tim. 3:1-3 II Tim. 4:3&4

**Do:** 1. What does Paul call apostasy in verse 3? (Q.2. Page 55)

 (Rev. Hanko is referring back to the last two sentences in his introduction. You may want to re-

 read those sentences to make clear the meaning of this question.)

2. What does ‘apostasy’ mean?

3. What did Jesus foretell in Matthew 24:11? (Q.2.a. page 55)

1. According to the following passages, what are some reasons for this falling away?

a. II Timothy 3:1-7

1. II Timothy 4:3&4
2. Do these things, which cause many to fall away, affect us?
3. What comfort do we have that the elect will never fall away?

 See John 10:24-30

**Food for thought:** “Says the apostle: ‘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.’ These words tell us as to what will immediately precede the revelation of the man of sin, the ‘apostasy’ comes first. The word apostasy literally means: desertion, repudiation, fall away. The meaning is of course to fall away from the truth, the faith, the word and commandment of God, from God Himself. Now, it is true that in the course of history there is oft times a falling away from God, from the truth. The history of the world and the church goes as it were in cycles. There are ups and downs, so to speak. Sometimes the church goes through a process of desertion, a falling away, deformation. And then again, the church is reformed and surges to new heights. History is full of examples. There also is always a falling away of individuals. People who leave the church, the truth, and in their generation are lost to the true church, although they may be ‘church’ members. However, our text speaks of the (not a) falling away. A falling away from God, the truth, the very traditions of Christianity, in a measure, in proportion as never before. A falling away into sin, corruption, moral and spiritual deterioration. Hence, the idea of the text is that there will come a time that there shall be, by normal historical processes, a falling away from God and His Word of truth among nominal Christendom as the world has never know before. Food for thought continued...

 “By droves and masses people will repudiate the Christian faith; there shall be mockers in those days. They will openly remove the mask of hypocrisy and boldly walk in the ways of sin and corruption. It will be a time of moral and spiritual bankruptcy as the world has never known. Knowledge of the truth is at the lowest ebb in spite of all education. And all this among the so-called Christian nations, and the church conceived of in the broad sense of the word.”

 ‘J.D.’ in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Revelation of the Man of Sin.

# To take with you today: John 10:27-29

“The eternal day will be born out of the night of sin.

As evil approaches its height it will assume ever more spiritual form.

**Let no one deceive you.**

**Be sober minded, guard against all misconception and misconstruction of the truth.**

**Truth, doctrine also this doctrine is important. “** (J.D.)

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# Day Three - False Prophets

Today Rev. Hanko has us look at false prophets in the Old Testament.

# II Thessalonians 2:3a - Study Guide page 55

**Read:** II Thess. 2:1-5 Deut. 13:1-4 I Kings 22:5-28 Jer. 14:14

**Do:** 1. Since a prophet is called of God and speaks the word that God lays in his mouth, what characterizes

a false prophet? (Q.2.a.1) pg. 55)

2. There were false prophets in the Old Testament. See for example Jer. 14:14. (Q.2.a.2.) pg. 55)

 Find other examples in scripture of false prophets.

3.According to I Kings 22:5-28 why do unbelievers (even in the church) desire to follow false prophets?

1. What does Jehovah say concerning false prophets in Jer. 23:30-32?

**Food for thought**: “I call your attention to the one fundamental implication which evidently has the emphasis in this passage (Deut., 13:1-5), namely, that false prophets are characterized by this, *that they contradict the Word* ***of*** *God.* This is the main point here. Of course, such false prophets do not bluntly say in so many words, “Let us serve other gods.” This would never be successful. But they garb their teaching in pious form, in religious form, in prophetic form, apparently in revelatory, Biblical form. They claim, “We also are prophets. We also speak the will of God!” However, if what they say is tested by the revealed will of God, by the Word of God - which is, after all, the only ultimate test - their teachings are found to be contradictory of that Word of God. And then, though it may seem to be pious - though, we would say today, though it may seem to sound Christian and evangelical - you can briefly characterize it as coming down to this: “Let us go after other gods.” This is the central contents of all such false prophecy and false teaching. In this you have expressed the central purpose of it. And in this you have expressed the ultimate outcome and end of all that heed such teaching: they follow after other gods! Or, to put it in up-to-date terminology: here you have expressed the central contents, the central purpose, and the outcome of all false theology: in the deepest sense it is characterized by saying, “Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them.”

 This is historically true. And thus it has been also in the history of the new dispensation. There has been and still is the lie of Roman Catholicism, for example. How often it has been confirmed by lying signs and wonders! Or there is the lie of spiritualism, or the lie of Pentecostalism ‘or so-called neo-Pentecostalism: confirmed by lying signs and wonders! Food for thought continued

cont. “There is the lie of modernism and its contradiction of the Word of God. It teaches that Jesus Christ is not come in the flesh. He is a noble man, and He is a great teacher; but He is not the Son of God incarnate. In particular there has been in our century, and there is today with renewed emphasis and with greater insidiousness than ever before, the lie of the social gospellers - a lie which is propagated increasingly in the Reformed community also. But it comes with the gospel that we must improve the world and try to make it into a kingdom of God. We must bring about renewal in society; we must proclaim social reconciliation. And we can do it, they say! Look at all our mighty works! Look how we can cast out devils - the devil of war and the devil of racism and the devil of poverty! Look how we can subdue the powers of nature and of the universe! We have the credentials! There is reason to believe us! And there are many taking up that hue and cry today. The church must forget its preoccupation with orthodoxy and with purity and with isolation and safety and institutional structure and must become open to the whole world! Let us go after other gods! The question is: “Let us love and serve Jehovah our God – and that is the God Who has revealed Himself, the God of the Scriptures!” Or: “Let us go after other gods - contrary to those Scriptures!” A third possibility there is not.”

 Prof. H.C. Hoeksema – S.B. article: Convocation Address: love Jehovah Your God!

# To take with you today: Deuteronomy 13:1-3

## **“Right doctrine and following after the truth and faithfulness in our confession**

**is in its deepest spiritual essence a question of the love of God!”** (above article)

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# \_Day 4 - False Prophets and False Teachers

Today Rev. Hanko has us look at false prophets in Paul’s day and false teachers in our own day.

**II Thessalonians 2:3a - Study Guide page 55**

**Read:** II Thess. 2:1-5 Matt. 24:2-6 II Cor. 11:13-16 Eph. 5:6 II Peter 2:1&2 and 14-19

**Do:** 1. Were there false prophets in Paul’s time? (Q. 2.a.3) page 55)

 See Acts 13:6

2. Do these false teachers arise out of the world or out of the church? (Q. 2.a.4) page 55)

3. What false teachings are prevalent in our day. (Q. 2.a.5) page 55)

**Food for thought**: The chief pretender of the Christ as Savior of the world is, of course, antichrist himself. His very name describes him as opposed to the Christ, setting himself over against the Christ of God in his attempt to destroy Him…Jesus warns us that these pseudo-christs also have their prophets, who are just as deceptive as they are…He says, “And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.” And… “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall. deceive the very elect.”… False teachers bringing false doctrines are prevalent everywhere. The plea for ecumenism has helped to break down denominational walls and wipe out doctrinal differences. The word “love” is the slogan of the day, yet not love for God or for the truth is meant, but rather a sentimental love for humanity to make this a better world and to introduce a universal peace among men… The infallibility of the Bible is denied, while all kinds of pseudo-Bibles under appealing names are being introduced to replace the time-tried versions. The market is literally flooded with deliberate corruptions of the inspired Word of the living God. And these corruptions are written in such a way that they have a strong appeal to the unwary. Along with this there is a growing yearning for the mystical and emotional. The neo-pentecostals, for example, boast of living in a higher sphere than the common believer, where they sin no more, where they can indulge in speaking in tongues, faith healing, and driving out devils.

 Food for thought continued

\_\_cont. “Our Lord forewarned us, “Many shall arise and say, I am Christ.” Today this Scripture is being fulfilled before our very eyes. Be not deceived! Jesus wants us to know that their earmark whereby we may recognize them is ***deceit.*** They are sincere in the sense that they deliberately seek to deceive. And, Jesus warns, they also succeed, for they deceive many. They come as wolves in sheep’s clothing to devour the sheep. We should see the picture. Outwardly they have a strong appeal. They call- themselves pastors, or radio pastors, or Christian psychologists, sent of God. They hold an open Bible in their hands. Maybe they are supported by an impressive choir, soloists, or other attractions. They draw huge crowds from miles away, for who is like unto this preacher, and who can appeal to so many? They have an appealing message. Jeremiah said of the false prophets of his day a word that can well be repeated here, “They heal the breach of the sin of my people lightly by crying ‘peace, peace,’ when there is no peace.” They want to win the whole world for Christ, or they aim at banishing all warfare, poverty, and race hatred from the earth, to make this a wonderful place to live. It is often not even as much what they say as what they do not say. They have a form of godliness, yet they deny the work of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word, which is the power thereof. Outwardly they seem very pious, as if they would put true believers to shame. They speak of a zeal, an enthusiasm as can be found nowhere else. The crowds follow them, at least for a time. And sneeringly they ask the small minority that objects, “Do you think that you have a monopoly on the truth?” False prophets, blind leaders of blind followers, who are the instruments of darkness to introduce the false church of antichrist.” Rev. C. Hanko in the S.B. article: When Shall These Things Be

# To take with you today: II Peter 2:1

**“The Church of Jesus Christ must keep her spiritual eyes wide open.**

 **We must recognize and be able to interpret correctly the signs of the times.**

**To do that we must know the truth.**

 **And to know the truth we must diligently study the Scriptures.”** Rev. Hanko

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**\_Day Five\_- \_The Deceit of False Christs**

## Today we will look at who Christ is and how false Christs appear.

# II Thessalonians 2:3a - Study Guide page 55

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 Matthew 24:23-28 II John verses 5-11

**Do:** 1. Of what does Christ speak in Matthew 24:24? (Q. 2.b. page 55)

2. How is Christ described in Philippians 2:9-11? (Q.2. b.1) pg. 55)

1. How then would a false Christ need to appear?

**Food for thought:** “A false Christ, therefore, is on who claims to be the redeemer and world-savior, but. is not. His claim is a lie. By his lying claim, the false Christ denies Jesus Christ. A false Christ is necessarily an antichrist.There is an ongoing process throughout history. Nineteen hundred years ago already, it was the case that Antichrist was in the process of coming. This process of coming involves the presence of many antichrists. Paul teaches the same thing in II Thessalonians 2. He writes in verse 7 of the mystery of iniquity which is working in the world to produce the Antichrist and states that this mystery of iniquity was already present and active in the world over nineteen hundred years ago, in the time of the apostles. Already in Old Testament times, but especially from the moment of Christ’s ascension into heaven, Antichrist has been coming. The great world-kingdom with its mighty, but wicked, leader will not drop out of the blue. The many false christs, or antichrists, are the men and women, raised up by the devil throughout history, who oppose Jesus Christ, present themselves as redeemers and saviors in Christ’s place, and thus prepare the way for the real Antichrist. They are the many forerunners of the Antichrist. Such were Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus Epiphanes in the old dispensation. Such were the Caesars of the Roman Empire.

 Food for thought continued...

 “Since heretical preachers and religious teachers serve the interests of the false christs by their denial that Jesus is the Christ, John refers to them too as antichrists. Today, as in John’s day, the world is swarming with antichrists. All those who deny that Jesus is God in the flesh, that He was born of a virgin, and that He was raised bodily from the dead are antichrists. All those who propagate the message of humanism, that man saves himself and that man himself is mankind’s only hope, no matter how the message is worded and no matter where it is preached, whether in churches, schools, newspapers, or whatever, are antichrists. They are, all of them, part and parcel of the coming of Antichrist.

 Just as with Antichrist, so with all of the false christs: they come to deceive. This is their purpose; this is their activity; this is their threat. Because Jesus wanted to warn His disciples against the deceitfulness of these enemies, He called them by the name that He did, “false christs.” Jesus had a practical purpose in mind: to alert us to the tactics and

power of Antichrist. Antichrist does not come openly showing his bristling hatred for Christ and the church. He comes with smooth lies. He comes with religious terminology, even the language of old orthodoxy. He operates, especially against the church, by deceit. He is false. He does not say, “There is no Christ and no salvation and no God; the Bible is all a fraud and the hope of believers, a mad delusion.” But he says, “Of course, there is a Christ and a God and a salvation, but I am that Christ, and ideal mankind is that God, and an earthly life free from war and poverty is that salvation….

 Antichrist consciously seeks to destroy the elect. If you would ask him, “Whom do you desire to deceive and destroy,” he would answer: “the elect of God.” Of course, he is ignorant of their identity; God has not given him a peek into the Lamb’s book of life. So, he must seek them out by their manifestation of election in their confession of Jesus Christ and obedience to God’s law. But he seeks the elect, and he seeks them exactly because they are the elect, or chosen, of God. These he desires to destroy spiritually because, fundamentally, he is against God and His Christ. He cannot reach into heaven to assault God there. He cannot anymore lay hands on Jesus the Christ on God’s right hand. But he knows that the elect church are the body of Jesus, so that to touch them is to touch Jesus. He knows that the elect are the chosen of God, eternally loved and destined for life and glory in God’s Kingdom, so that to destroy one of them would be to wound and defeat God. Not only is this the *purpose* of the false christs, it would also be the result, “if it were possible.” Prof. David Engelsma in the Standard Bearer article: The Coming of Antichrist

### To take with you today: Matthew 24:23&24

**“Does this leave the elect believer defenseless?**

**Not at all.**

**He will be able to identify and reject Antichrist,**

 **as now he is able to identify and reject the many false christs**

 **and false prophets by the Word of God, Holy Scripture.”** Prof. Engelsma

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# Day Six - False Christs

## Today we take a closer look at false Christs – even those of our own day

**II Thessalonians 2:3a - Study Guide page 56**

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 Matthew 24: 23-28 II John verses 5-11

**Do:** 1. Should the pope be classified as a false Christ? Why or why not? (Q. 2.b.2) pg. 56)

2. Give some evidences of false christs in our day? (Q.2.b.3) pg. 56)

3. What is Christ’s warning concerning these deceivers? (Q.2 b.4) pg. 56)

**Food for thought:** “With Scripture as our criterion what must we look for as characteristic of the false christ’s message? The answer is: all the emphasis falls on man, with God disappearing even farther in the background. All that the fathers fought, bled, and died for at the time of the Reformation is consistently denied. They want nothing of the truth of sovereign predestination. They consider election a cold doctrine, while they shudder at the very mention of reprobation. God’s justice and holiness are hardly mentioned, especially because they preach a God who loves all men and wants all men to be saved. Continued

 “They deny man’s depravity. ‘Sin’ has become a nasty word. Many may have faults, frustrations, or problems, but let’s not talk about sin. There is much good in the worst of men; we should strive to improve on that. Christ died for all men. It is considered rank heresy to maintain that Christ laid down His life only for His sheep. Even substitutionary atonement is become foreign to the average preacher… A Christ who died only to save sinners is not the full and complete Savior they seek. They want a Jesus Who also works toward social reform, world betterment, exerting His influence in every sphere of life. Along with all this, the church seeks to make friends with the world, so that the antithesis between light and darkness becomes obliterated. The office in the church becomes a function, which women can fill as well as men. The preaching of the Word is substituted with dialogue, congregational participation, or even movies. The sacraments are desecrated to a love feast of sorts. Church discipline is not exercised anymore, so that the keys of the kingdom have fallen into disuse. The portal of Zion’s fortress stands wide open for free access of whoever cares to enter. Be not deceived. The devil is doing his utmost, since he knows that he has but a little while. He does all that he can to prevent the return of Christ and the final judgment, when he and his followers will have their own reward in utter darkness. But God is King forever; let the nations tremble. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord will hold them in derision. For already He has exalted His Christ as Lord over all. And Christ Himself assures us, “Behold, I come, quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give unto every man as his works shall be.”

 Rev. C. Hanko in the S.B. article: When Shall These Things Be

# To take with you today: II John verse 7

#### “Give Thou Thy help against the foe, for help of man is vain;

 Through God we shall do valiantly, the victory He shall gain.” Psalter #158 st. 8

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# Day Seven - False Teachers and False Peace

Today we will look into false teachers in the church of today and outward peace.

# II Thessalonians 2:3a - Study Guide page 56

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 Matthew 7:15-20

**Do:** 1. Of what does Jesus warn in Matthew 7:15? (Q.2. c. pg.56)

2. When we speak of ‘liberals’ in the church, do we mean that they are false teachers? (Q.2. c.1) pg.56)

3. Is it right to compromise the truth in order to attain an outward unity and peace? (Q.2. c.2) pg. 56)

1. What are some ways in which the church world today is compromising to attain that outward unity and peace? Is that something our churches face?
2. What is the basis of unity and peace? (Q.2.c.3) pg. 56)

**Food for thought:** (Concerning liberals in the church – quoted in All Around Us in the September 1, 2005 issue of the Standard Bearer) “Raised in the Christian and Calvinistic faith, (Dr. Howard VanTill) was taught to see all things through the lens of Scripture. Later as a trained scientist however, that lens began to blur as his research into science and the cosmos, and the teaching of Scripture were compared. (The book) *The Fourth Day* was VanTill’s attempt to reconcile, for himself, for his students, and for the Christian community, the two differing views of creation being presented by both disciplines, and to offer an explanation for the place and purposes of both general and special revelation. Yet despite repeated assertions that his desire was to take Scripture 'seriously’, what critics came to see in *The Fourth Day* was VanTill’s capitulation to evolutionary theory as fact and his subsequent interpretation of God’s Word to accommodate his understanding and position. Food for thought continued

 “VanTill introduced the Christian Reformed community to the possibility that evolution was the process God used to create or call into being the heavens and the earth. He dubbed it ‘the creationomic perspective.’… Now a member of an independent community church…in online dialogues with his pastor Ian Lawton, Howard VanTill speaks disparagingly of his ‘upbringing (indoctrination) as a Calvinist.’ VanTill then says. ‘I must admit that the old systematic theology with its independent, omnipotent , omniscient, supernatural ruler-God-Judge who is radically distinct from the created world doesn’t hold up to scrutiny today.’ ‘As I see it, The Sacred is far more intimately present in the world of daily experience that the old system granted… I have abandoned supernaturalism’s portrait of ‘God’ and am on a search to find a better portrait of what ‘God’ represents. I seek a ‘God’ who is intimately resident in all that transpires ‘naturally.’

 Rev. Van Baren then comments: “It ought to be a warning again that when one denies or distorts a part of infallible Scripture, inevitably he must deny the whole.”

# Second Food for thought: (Concerning outward unity and peace) “The final world government of antichrist cannot succeed without the blessing of the nominally Christian church. This is after all, the real thrust of modern ecumenism. A world government cannot be realized without a world church to add its blessing. The World Council of Churches is such a media. This false church organization isn’t interested in the preaching of the gospel of the Word of God. Rather, its forte is social improvement. Repeatedly it has to flirt with government, leading its membership to walk openly in agreement with the principles of antichrist. How many decisions of the World Council deal with maintaining the truth of the Word of God in an apostate

generation? The list includes instead, the war in Vietnam, civil rights, distribution of wealth, and all the social issues of our day. Surely this false religion gives the biggest thrust to the world government to bring it to realization. The ecumenical movement isn’t going to be satisfied with unifying Protestantism, it must include Roman Catholicism not only, but all the religions of the world. Christianity isn’t the only good religion, there are good points in Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islamism as well. We have to recognize this and then we will be able to live at peace as a successful crew upon spaceship earth. The human race must and will succeed. This is the gospel of the false church today. It proves to us that the end is very near.” Rev. Jason Kortering in the booklet: A Study in Eschatology

# To take with you today: Matthew 7:15&16a

“The Bible is the Word of God.

**Because God inspired the Word, it is infallible, without error.**

**All the truth of salvation is written clearly within its pages.**

 **May God give us childlike faith to bow in humble reverence before His Word.”** Rev. Kortering

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# Day Eight - The Antichrist

Today we begin to look at scripture’s teaching of the antichrist.

 The rest of this lesson will be centered mostly on who he is.

# II Thessalonians 2:3 - Study Guide page 56

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 I John 2:18-25 I John 4:3 II John verse 7

**Do:** 1. The man of sin represents the culmination of the sin of mankind since paradise (verse 3b)

He is the ‘mystery of iniquity’ (lawlessness) (verse 7), that Wicked (verse 8). (#3.pg. 56)

2. He is also called ‘the son of perdition,’ born out of perdition and working only perdition (loss or destruction).

 For reference see Herman Hoeksema, Behold He Cometh and Barry Gritters, ‘Antichrist’ (Q.3.a.pg.56)

3. For today we will have no questions but read from the above sources and begin to understand who the antichrist is. (We will not look into what he does yet.) You may jot notes from what you learn in your reading.

 Continued

3. Read the following verses which teach about the antichrist

 Daniel 7:25

 Matthew 24:24

 Revelation 13:2-8

**Food for thought:** “In the future, Antichrist will come fully, but only as the result of gradual development and as the culmination of a long process. The constant activity in the world to produce Antichrist is that of the spirit of Antichrist, according to I John 4:1-3. There is a personal, crafty, powerful spirit at work in the world in every area of human life, and that spirit is Satan. But he is at work as the spirit of *Antichrist,* as the spirit that aims at and works for one thing: *Antichrist.* Here, by the way, you see the formal similarity, the striking parallel, of Christ and Antichrist. Just as Christ has His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who functions as the Spirit of Christ to realize the Kingdom of Christ, so does Antichrist have his spirit, the devil, who functions on behalf of Antichrist. Prof. David Engelsma in the Standard Bearer article: The Coming of Antichrist

# To take with you today: I John 4:3&4

**“The defense of the church is the Word of God.**

**The Word is a sure defense.**

**Antichrist will fail.**

 **His failure is certain because he opposes God, the Almighty.”** Prof. Engelsma

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# \_Day Nine\_- \_The Antichrist

## Today we look at more scriptural teaching concerning the antichrist.

# II Thessalonians 2:3&4 - Study Guide page 57

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 Daniel 7:1-8 Matthew 24:15

**Do:** 1. How is the man of sin pictured in Daniel 7:8? (Q. 3.a.1) pg.57)

2. What is he called in Matthew 24:15? (Q. 3.a.2) pg.57)

3. What is he called in I John 2: 18 & 22? (Q. 3.a.3) pg. 57)

4. What does the term in I John 2:18, 22 mean? (Q.3.a.4) pg. 57)

**Food for thought:** . The word antichrist is found in Scripture only in the epistles of John. This, of course, does not mean that these are the only passages in Holy Writ that refer to him. There are many passages in the Word of God that refer to him. The Lord speaks of false prophets that come in sheep’s clothing but who inwardly are ravening wolves. Besides, He warns that many shall come in His Name, saying that they are Christ, and shall deceive many. And in Matt. 24:24 we read: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” And it is well known that it is the antichrist who is held before us in the book of Revelation, chapters 13 and 17. In addition to this, we have a very vivid description of the antichrist, the Man of Sin, whose chief characteristic is sin, the “Son of Perdition,” in 2 Thess. 2:3-l 0. But the word antichrist itself appears only in the epistles of John – see I John 2:18,22; I John 4:3; 2 John 7. It lies in the nature of the case that the Antichrist should reveal himself in the New Dispensation. This does not mean that he was completely absent in the Old Testament. Even as Christ did not appear until the New Dispensation, but there was a shadow of Him in the Old Testament, so there was no antichrist until the New Dispensation, but there was a shadow of him in the days of the shadows. Food for thought continued

 “In Rev. 12 we have a picture of the church of God as in the Old Dispensation. The woman there, of whom we read that she was with child, represents the church of the Old Dispensation. The dragon who threatens her is, we know, the devil. And this certainly means that the church was constantly threatened by the representative of the dragon, and this representative is surely the type of the antichrist throughout the days of the Old Dispensation.

 The coming of the antichrist is characteristic of the New Dispensation. This, of course, is understandable. Christ came. And His coming, of course, draws forth the coming of the antichrist. It is not difficult to envision a time when a leader will emerge out of all our present chaos who will lead the peoples of the earth out of our present problems and difficulties. Such a man will surely be worshipped.”

 Rev. H. Veldman in the Standard Bearer article: The Antichrist

# To take with you today: Revelation 3:11

“The reign of antichrist is being prepared.

**What shall we say?**

**Let us be sober and watch unto prayer.**

 **Let us hold fast that which we have, that no man take our crown.”** Rev. Veldman

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**\_Day Ten - \_The Antichrist**

Today we will look at how this teaching affects our lives.

# II Thessalonians 2:3-4 - Study Guide page 57

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 I John 2:18-24 Rev. 13

**Do:** 1. Should we be on our guard against antichristian powers working in the church today?

 (Q. 3.a.5) pg.57)

1. Mention some specific ways we can best be on our guard?
2. Using the names given the antichrist and the works he will do listed in verses 3&4, what must we look for, and be prepared to fight against?

**Food for thought:** “Antichrist’s name give us indication of what he is. He is Anti-*christ.* As every Jew knows, the name Christ is simply the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah,* whom the Jews expected to come in God’s name to save them. The Messiah, or Christ, is the one anointed by God and qualified to carry out a certain work in God’s name. Christ’s work is to redeem God’s people from sin and death by His own death, and to renew God’s creation as a creation of righteousness and peace. He is God’s anointed, the servant of Jehovah. He is qualified to do the work of redeeming God’s people and renewing creation. The confession of the church down through the ages is ‘Jesus is the Christ.’

 Antichrist is a *false* Christ, according to Matthew 24:24. He claims to be anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and claims to be qualified to do the work in God’s name of redeeming God’s people and renewing the creation. But he is not. He is a liar. His claims are false. He is a false Christ…Just as antivenin is given to counteract the venom of a snake bite, and antiseptic is used against infection, so Anti*christ* is against, is opposed to, Jesus Christ. This tells us the *essence* of what Antichrist is: he is opposition to God’s Christ… the point of the vision (in Revelation 13) is that the reality of Antichrist is two cooperating powers, the one political, the other, ecclesiastical….It is plain that this beast represents false religion. Preaching and teaching make men worship something or someone. But this is false teaching and lying preaching. That’s evident from the fact that this beast looks like a lamb, looks like Jesus Christ and all the Jesus Christ represents, but in actuality is a beast. He claims to speak like Jesus but has the foul breath and fiery speech (in the eyes and nostrils of God) of a dragon.”

 Prof. Barry Gritters in the pamphlet The Antichrist Continued…

# To take with you today: Luke 21:36

**“When the saint fights Antichrist in his heart, with his heart,**

**God will give him the strength to oppose Antichrist when he is revealed in the last day,**

 **at the end of which he will be destroyed utterly and completely.”** Rev. Gritters

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**\_Day Eleven - The Antichrist**

Today we continue to look into a description of the man of sin.

# II Thessalonians 2:3&4 - Study Guide page 57

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 Daniel 7:25 Revelation 13:1-9 Revelation 17: 7-15

**Do:** 1. How is the man of sin described in Revelation 13:2? (Q. 3.a.6) pg. 57)

2. Will the antichrist be a political as well as a religious power? (Q. 3.a.7) pg. 57)

 see Daniel 7:25

 see Revelation 17:7-15

3. Is it possible that the pope might be the antichrist? Why or why not? (Q. 3.a.8) pg. 57)

**Food for thought:** “Scripture teaches that, prior to the coming of Christ, Antichrist will be revealed (II Thess. 2; Rev. 13). The full reality of Antichrist is political. Antichrist is a world-power, a kingdom (Dan. 7; 11; Rev. 13:1-10). There is solid evidence that Antichrist will also be an individual human person - the powerful head of the worldwide kingdom of Satan. The precursors of Antichrist in history were great kingdoms with their personal ruler, e.g., Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:7). Also, II Thessalonians 2 speaks of “that man of sin”; “the son of perdition”; and “that Wicked (One).” As the name, “Antichrist,” indicates, this coming world-ruler with his universal kingdom will both take Christ’s place and oppose the Christ of Scripture. He will deceive all those nominal Christians who “received not the love of the truth” (II Thess. 2:10). He will persecute the saints with the great tribulation (Dan. 11:33; Rev. 13:7). Antichrist must be revealed in his time before the Day of Christ can come (II Thess. 2). This understanding of the biblical doctrine of Antichrist is the Reformed tradition. Herman Hoeksema expresses this tradition in his Reformed Dogmatics(pp. 804-815), as well as in his commentary on Revelation, Behold, He Cometh***!*** (pp. 451- 464). Before the coming of the Lord on the clouds of heaven, there will be a culmination of the development of the Man of Sin in the power of Antichrist. The ultimate manifestation of Antichrist will assume the form of a political world-power, a kingdom and its ruler, or government. In the future there will be the full realization of a great world-power, combining in itself all powers of the earth, with a government which has all the authority of the dragon, the old serpent, the devil. Antichrist represents both the world-power and its government. We come to the conclusion that this beast is the symbol of a political government as we know it, as it naturally culminates in and is represented by its head…Let me also warn you not to make the mistake of finding him (Antichrist) already in his full manifestation and power. Never yet has there been a power such as is pictured here.... Let no one beguile you. This anti-christian power is not yet in its full reality... In the future coming of Antichrist, the false church, no doubt headed by the Roman Catholic Church, that is, the pope, will play an important role. Besides, Antichrist has a history. The mystery of iniquity has always been working in various ways.: Antiochus Epiphanes, enemy of the covenant people in the inter-testamentary period, was Antichrist-in type. The Roman Empire that persecuted the church from about A.D. 65 until about, the beginning of the 4th century was the typical Antichrist. Food for thought continued…

“So also was the persecuting Roman Church of the 16th and 17th centuries developing Antichrist. The Reformers, therefore, were not in error when they regarded the blaspheming, persecuting Roman Catholic Church as Antichrist. But a doctrine of Antichrist that does not look for a future culmination of the history-long coming of Satan’s imitation of God’s Christ in a literal world-power uniting all nations under one man is a mistake… Although I deny that the papacy is exclusively, exhaustively, or even primarily the Antichrist of the Bible, holding that Antichrist is a future kingdom with a personal, political head, I believe, with Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, that the Roman Catholic Church is a false church. Before Christ comes, Antichrist must be revealed in his time (II Thess. 2). This is not far off. The saints ought to be seeing this sign and arming themselves with spiritual armament for this last and greatest of the battles of Christ’s church.” Prof. David Engelsma in the S.B. article: Is the Pope Antichrist?

# To take with you: Matthew 24:44-46

“Two important elements of Reformed eschatology are not speculation, but biblical revelation:

**Antichrist is a sign of the coming of Christ,**

 **And in her war with him, the true church will do valiantly.** Prof. Engelsma

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# \_Day Twelve - \_The Antichrist

Today we will look into yet more descriptions of the antichrist.

**II Thessalonians 2:3-6 - Study Guide page 57-58**

**Read:** II Thessalonians 2:1-5 Daniel 7:19-28 Revelation 13:1&2

**Do:** 1. How does Paul describe the man of sin in II Thessalonians 2:4? (Q. 3.b. pg. 57)

3. How does Daniel describe him in Daniel 7:25? (Q. 3.c. pg.58)

4. How is the man of sin described in Revelation 13:2? (Q.3.d. pg.58)

**Food for thought:** “The man of sin will be a dictator so absolute as the world has never known before, he will assume a monopoly….The text clearly states that ‘He 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; (vs. 4). Just think of it: ‘That he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God.’ Many would refer this expression to the Jewish temple, but there is no need of this and no sense to it. That temple is destroyed, and even if it were rebuilt, it still would not be the temple of God but merely a building of men. No, but the ‘temple of God’; is the church, as can easily be proven from Scripture itself which calls the church of the New Testament God’s temple. Hence, the meaning is first of all that this man of sin shall be religious. He shall sit, according to the original ‘invade,’ the temple, the church. From a religions point of view there shall be the center of his seat. There he shall wield his power and demand obedience and worship…this will be horrible for the true church of God. But there is still more; our text says: ‘He shall show himself that he is God.’ Indeed, a very strong expression. What does it mean? He will pose as God, assume the place of God, demand that he be acknowledged as God. And he will undoubtedly back up his claim with power and ‘lying wonders,’ as we read further in the chapter. And the result will be that he shall be acknowledged as God by the inhabitants of the earth….

 Food for thought continued

\_\_\_cont. “The text teaches us that this man of sin must be revealed. Notice, he is ‘the man of sin’ not merely a sinful man, but the man of sin, the only one who can be called thus. His whole being, appearance, work is not only sinful but the very ripened fruit of sin, sin in its ultimate and extremest development. That man of sin has never been…The apostle says that the man of sin will be revealed…The man of sin can only be revealed when all the means of human development are at his command and sin has reached its ultimate, final fruit. And that is just exactly what the text states about this man of sin. Sin, as sin will reach in him its highest peak. It will be more conscious, deliberate, malignant, damnable that any brutality ever before. In him is to be revealed what sin really is and really does when all the means are at its command. Hence, the revelation of the man of sin is the very counterpart, the very opposite of the revelation of Christ. Christ’s final revelation, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, will manifest Him in all His power, glory, beauty, blessedness as the Servant of the Lord. The revelation of the man of sin will show what man, sinful man will do and shall do when he has reached the very zenith of his power and possibilities. Actually, Antichrist is always present but he is not yet revealed.

 Our text furthermore calls him ‘the son of perdition.’ What this means is rather plain. He is born of perdition, the son of it. He is destined for perdition, ruin, waste, everlasting destruction. From his very beginning to the very end he is headed for nothing else but perdition. We meet here, of course with an element of great comfort for the people of God. Mighty as he may seem, powerful as he may act, dictatorial as he may be, terrible in his oppression, he is ‘the son of perdition.’ He who sits in heaven shall laugh and hold him in derision. In fact, God also uses this ‘son of perdition’ to realize His counsel. He cannot move either to the right or to the left contrary to God’s counsel…Our text pictures to us a terrible reality. O, indeed, there have been various types of this man of sin, throughout history, already in the Old Testament, but the final reality of it, which is sure to come, is not yet; he is not yet revealed. But when he shall be revealed God’s people will recognize him. And we are drawing ever closer toward the end of the ages and the moment of his revelation. It is our calling to prepare for that time, to watch and pray and keep our garments clean.” J.D. in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Revelation of the Man of Sin

# To take with you today: II Thessalonians 2:3&4

**“By God’s decree His Son receives the nations for His heritage;**

 **The conquering Christ supreme shall reign as King of kings, from age to age.”** Psalter #4 st. 3

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# \_\_Day Thirteen\_\_

**Review of II Thessalonians 2:1-6**

Notes taken from commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, and John Calvin.

**2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,**

**2:1 Now we beseech you,** (urge, entreat, as with an oath) **brethren, by** (or, with respect to) **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,** (with respect to Christ’s final coming) **and by our gathering together unto him,** (the consummating or final gathering together of the saints to Him at His coming,)

**2:2 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.**

**2:2 That ye be not soon shaken** (literally, "tossed" as ships tossed by an agitated sea.) **in mind,** (that is, from your mental steadfastness on the subject)  **or be troubled,** (This verb applies to *emotional* agitation; as "shaken" to *intellectual*.)  **neither by spirit,** (by a *person professing* to have the *spirit* of prophecy) **nor by word** *(of mouth* - some word or saying alleged to be that of Paul, orally communicated) **nor by letter as from us,** (As purporting to be from us, whereas it is a forgery) **as that the day of Christ** (the “day of *the Lord.*") **is at hand.** ("is *immediately imminent,*" literally, "is *present*"; "is *instantly* coming.") Continued

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**2:3 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;**

**2:3 Let no man deceive** (mislead) **you by any means:** ("in any manner." He had indicated three ways in which they might be deceived) **for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,** (the great apostasy) **and that man of sin (**As righteousness found its embodiment in Christ, "the Lord our righteousness," so "sin" shall have its embodiment in "the man of sin.") **be revealed,** (until the man of sin – the antichrist - the tyrant has manifested himself. As Christ was first in *mystery,* and afterwards *revealed*, so Antichrist is first in mystery, and afterwards shall be developed and revealed) **the son of perdition;** (a title applied besides to Judas and to none else. He is *the son of perdition,* as consigning many to it, and finally doomed to it himself. "He whose essence and inheritance is perdition")

**2:4 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.**

**2:4 Who** (Antichrist) **opposeth and exalteth himself** (There is but one *Greek* article to both participles, implying that the reason why he *opposeth himself* is in order that he may *exalt himself above.* He not merely *assumes* Christ's character, but "*opposes*" Christ. The *Greek* implies one *situated on an opposite side*. One who, on the destruction of every religion, shall seek to establish his own throne, and for God's great truth, "God is man," to substitute his own lie, "Man is God") **above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;** (True religion is that by which the true God alone is worshipped; that, the son of perdition will transfer to himself.) **so that he as God sitteth (**Sitteth here implies his occupying the place of power and majesty in opposition to Him who "sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high") **in the temple of God,** (he will set up his rule in the nominal church) **shewing himself that he is God.** (assuming to himself the place of God with blasphemous and arrogant display.)

**2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**

**2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?** (Paul mildly reproves them, that they had allowed forgetfulness of a matter so important and so useful.)

**Food for thought:** “If we consult various passages of Scripture we can form a fairly good idea of what this antichristian power will be. First, it is a political power which will set up a central government to rule all the nations of the world…All the peoples of the earth will subject themselves willingly under this rule, for he will govern them, not by force, but by every appearance of good will. He will be a mighty power, for he will have all the modern discoveries and inventions at his disposal….He will probably be able to determine what every individual is doing at any given moment, and he will so completely direct the lives of all his subjects, so that it will be impossible to own a home, to drive a car, or to buy a loaf of bread without his permission…Moreover, Scripture points out that this power will defiantly set himself up as God to be worshipped by all mankind…No wonder his name is ‘Abomination.’ This power arises out of the false church. All the false teachers who have misled the masses with their subtle and God-dishonoring heresies find their culmination in him…. Seemingly Satan will have triumphed over the cause of Christ upon the earth. To all appearances, he will have succeeded in establishing his kingdom before Christ could establish the eternal kingdom of heaven, and thereby he has made Christ’s kingdom forever impossible.

This antichristian power will be the worst manifestation of sin this world has ever known. He is anti-God, anti-Christ. Therefore, Scripture also refers to him as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the final prodigy of the human race in which sin has developed for some six thousand years or more. In him the measure of iniquity will be full…Blasphemy against God and mockery with all that is holy will be a daily pastime. The common basis for the unity and friendship of all men will be their hatred against God.

Continued

 “Therefore, finally, this abomination of desolation will persecute the true believers. It is exactly for that purpose that he sets himself in the Holy Place. While all the world follows after the beast with wonder and amazement, the true believers will despise him. They will plainly recognize him for what he is, the tool of Satan to defy God and to destroy the cause of Christ upon the earth. Therefore, they will refuse to bow down before him or even to bear his mark. They will rather suffer affliction and death than deny their God by showing recognition to Antichrist. For that reason, they are the last hindrance which the Beast must overcome to attain his goal. That is the reason why he is also so bitterly opposed to these true believers. They must be exterminated. They will not be allowed to buy or sell without his mark, so that their very existence is threatened. They will not be able to worship God, so that all churches will be closed and all public worship forbidden. They will be tormented, imprisoned, hunted as beasts of the field, and even killed for the name of Christ.

 Does that sound impossible to you? Not if you consider the signs of the times as they are evident already in our day… Consider how the denominational walls are crumbling away because of lack of interest in the truth of Scripture, so that it is a simple matter for most of these churches to unite on common ground today. How large has become the number of nominal Christians. How easily these could be united in worship of the Beast!

 For us today this word is not spoken to create terror in our souls, but rather to prepare us for what is coming. Trying times await the church of Christ. And we know not how soon these times will be upon us. But we do know that God rules in the heavens and is carrying out His counsel. Christ is hastening His return. He is coming speedily. Therefore, it remains our calling to hold that which we have.”

 Rev. C. Hanko in the Reformed Witness Hour sermon: The Abomination of Desolation

“We are called to be faithful,

even though this faithfulness involves the loss of earthly comforts and pleasures,

yes, even though it involves suffering for Christ’s sake, even unto death.

**The crown of life awaits us.**

**In that confidence we pray:**

 **Come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly.”** Rev. Hanko