

Eschatology

When and How Will Antichrist be Revealed?

By Dr. Paul M. Elliott

From *The Church and the Last Things* by Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Part two of a series. Read [part one](#).

Editor's note: We receive frequent inquiries about Biblical eschatology in general and the Antichrist in particular. To answer some of those questions, we're presenting a three-part series drawing from chapter eleven of *The Church and the Last Things* by Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Crossway Books, 1998, pages 115-118).

In part one, we presented a brief survey of Bible prophecy concerning Antichrist. Today Dr. Lloyd-Jones deals with the circumstances of the revelation of Antichrist. In tomorrow's final installment, he discusses major schools of thought on the identity of Antichrist, with particular emphasis on the view held by most of the 16th-century Protestant Reformers.

Before beginning today's quotation from *The Church and the Last Things*, we've included the text of the passage Dr. Lloyd-Jones addresses. — *Paul Elliott*

2 Thessalonians Chapter Two

1. Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,
2. not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

3. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,
4. who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
5. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?
6. And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.
7. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.
8. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.
9. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
10. and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
11. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,
12. that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
13. But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
14. to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.
16. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

17. comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

The Circumstances of the Revelation of Antichrist

...Of the little horn in Daniel we are told, 'whose look was more stout than his fellows' (Dan. 7:20), while it is asked of the beast, 'Who is able to make war with him?' (Rev.13:4). And the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians works, we are told 'with all power and signs and lying wonders' (2 Thess. 2:9).

Finally, in each passage divine homage is demanded: the little horn sets himself over the saints and times and laws of the Most High (Dan. 7:21, 25); the beast causes multitudes to worship him (Rev. 13:12), and the man of sin sets himself up as God (2 Thess. 2:4).

So, having seen the relationship between those three passages, what does it all mean and what is Paul teaching in 2 Thessalonians 2? Well, Paul begins by saying that the 'day of Christ' is not as near as some people had been saying, and then he goes on to explain that certain things must happen first.

First, there will be apostasy — 'a falling away'. That must happen in the Church and will be *the* [i.e., the great] *apostasy*. Then 'that man of sin', 'the son of perdition', the wicked and lawless one will be revealed. Notice that is not that he will come, for he is already present and working, but that at that point he will be revealed.

Paul then goes on to say certain things about him. We are told that he is lawless. This is not negative sin, but positive resistance against God. It is deliberate disobedience in which self-will is raised to the highest power.

Second, he is opposed to God and to Christ and His kingdom and work. He is the Antichrist, who stands instead of Christ and takes the Christian name, yet is against the kingdom of truth which the name implies. Third, he sits in the sanctuary of God,

and his fourth characteristic is self-deification — 'shewing himself that he is God' (2 Thess. 2:4).

Fifth, Paul says that this is a mystery which, as always in the New Testament, is only revealed to those who have spiritual understanding.

Sixth, his presence is masked by lying pretensions and false miracles, as Paul enumerates in verses 9 to 11 — 'all power and signs and lying wonders', making people believe a lie, which is the working of Satan, and arrogating to himself the whole domain of faith.

Paul also says that the revelation of the man of sin is delayed by a restraining power (v. 7) and that he is doomed to destruction at Christ's coming: 'whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth' (v. 8). But Paul also makes it clear that 'the mystery of iniquity' has already started — 'doth already work' (v. 7). However, as we have seen, unlike Daniel, Paul does not give the exact times.

Next: [Schools of Thought on the Identity of Antichrist](#)

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Part one of a three-part series from the book, 'The Church and the Last Things', by Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

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