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Faith Bible Church
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-56
2 Thessalonians 2: Growth of Demonism and Heresy in the Church Age

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12.

Scripture is explicit that the Antichrist will not come until after a great apostasy at the end of the Church age when the One (Holy Spirit) who restrains him is taken away, i.e. at the Rapture. Apostasy, which has been in progress throughout the Church age, will reach a saturation point *throughout the churches* just prior to the Rapture. The growth of apostasy in liberal churches should not be surprising. What surprises me is how much heresy and apostasy exist in Bible churches, including in some “doctrinal believers.” To be sure, heresies in modern conservative Bible churches are much different than the heresies in liberal churches. Unlike the liberal churches, the typical conservative Bible believer does not deny that the Bible is the Word of God. He is not afraid to assert his belief in the God of the Bible. However, it is with great sorry that I must report that many of these believers, including some doctrinal believers, really do not believe in the God of the Bible as the Bible reveals Him. Due to influences of anti-intellectualism and anti-philosophical realism, many have heretical views of God with regard to His nature, His relation with all creation, as well as about the true focus of the spiritual life (many are more focused on using God for self and personal problems than on truly loving and serving Him above all else). I have much more to say about this in our next Bible class. I will just add that my recent breakthroughs in Job have revealed not only the need for every believer to understand God’s concurrentism, but His love. You may have noticed that my last Bible class did not start with a passage on the power of Truth or the Word of God, it began with passages on loving God. I will explain this shift in our next Bible class. In sum, the point of life is always loving God. It was the issue for Job and it is *the issue* for you and me. The focus must always be on growing in love for God. While we necessarily need the Word of God to love God with all of minds, souls, and hearts, the *first issue* is loving God. I do not want to be misunderstood with this shift in focus. It is the difference between living our whole lives loving God and seeing the Word of God as a means of doing that versus making the first issue the Bible with the idea that once we get enough doctrine then through osmosis we will somehow love God. When the proper focus on God is front and center in all things, then we will understand our need to go to the Word of God to find out more about Him. We are to love God with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. We are to love the God of the Bible. I am discovering more and more than many doctrinal believers really do not believe in the God of the Bible, especially as He is presented in Job. There are other problems in our camp due to rejection of philosophical realism that must be addressed and corrected. I have discovered that some doctrinal believers possess a cultic Word of Faith philosophical bent in their application of wonderful doctrines such as faith-rest—anti-intellectualism always leads to a superstitious view of God and reality. The issue for every believer is to advance in Truth. It really does not matter where we start: the key is making whatever adjustments need to be made to stay on the track of moving closer to God through truth, total truth, whole truth. More on this later.

Biblical prophecy of massive apostasy in the latter days of the Church is clear and unmistakable. It is not like God did not warn us. Read 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:1-5; 2 Peter 2; Jude 1. The apostasy that exists in modern Christianity will give way to a complete falling away. Darkness merges into gross darkness. “The mystery of lawlessness” yields to “the lawless one” (2 Thess. 2:3-4, 8). A great deal of demonic activity on earth is restrained during the Church age (2 Thess. 2:7). When the Restrainer is taken out of the way, demonic power will be fully unleashed on earth in “power, and signs, and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9). After the Rapture, demonic delusion becomes an unrestricted, irresistible, overwhelming “deceit of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). Because of rejection of Truth, they will be abandoned by divine justice to judicial blindness and Satanic error, that “they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Read Romans 1:24-32 and note divine concurrentism where God hands truth-rejecting people over to evil and note how they end up ‘calling evil good and good evil.’ We see this spirit in our own age. The period that follows the Church age will be pre-eminently the period of Satan’s sway and the hour of the power of darkness, the heyday of demonic deception, the moment for the revelation of the “mystery of lawlessness.”

We can see *a* mystery of lawlessness in our own age in our government—“it is already at work,” 2 Thess. 2:7. Satan always works against laws of divine establishment, basic morality for all members of the human race—for believers and unbelievers. We are increasingly becoming a lawless nation as immoral laws are passed and moral laws are ignored; again, where evil is called good and good is called evil. This is all part of Satan’s plan to breakdown society and destroy the image of God in man, which includes a moral and social nature. In a society where evil is called good and good is called evil it is no wonder that Satan will be worshipped through the personage of the Antichrist.

With the manifestation of the lawless one, the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3, 8, 12), the mystery of lawlessness will cease to be a mystery. Every unrevealed element in it will be fully made known. Satanic treachery and demonic perfidy will then be disclosed in all their stark and hideous reality. Satan will demonstrate that he had not, for a moment, given up his lawless determination to be like the Most High. Through his tools of deception, he will oppose and exalt himself “against all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself up as God (2 Thess. 2:4). He will promote his deception with startling displays of diabolic miracles (2 Thess. 2:9). They will be amazing!!

Having rejected God, the world will accept “the man of sin” as God, and Satan will at last, so he thinks, achieve his goal—to be like the Most High, and be accorded divine worship. This is really what he is after; read Isaiah 14:12-15 and Matthew 4:9. All he has to do to get man to worship him is to redefine God, which is very easy when man does not truly understand the God of the Bible, which requires metaphysics of classical realism (Reality as such). What concerns me as a believer and pastor is that so many Christians really do not know or care about the true nature of Esse. What a mess! I am grateful for all the positive believers of FBC for your true interest in and love for God as manifested by your love for truth, whole truth, total truth. You are such a blessing to me and others☺

*In ‘Ehyeh,
Pastor Don Hargrove*