

# Prophecy in Perspective

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An email newsletter

**Our Times** - *Prophecy in Current Events*

## The Rise of The New World Leader

Recently, President Obama called for our naval presence to be increased off the coast of Yemen. Also a massive volcano eruption is happening in Chile. In addition, there has been a devastating earthquake in Nepal. The world cannot help but notice that things seem to be shaping up for a great change on the world scene. These and many other events in the world and in the church indicate that there is a growing desire for a new world spiritual and political leader. This call for someone who possesses supernatural abilities to bring peace and to advance man's understanding and practice of spirituality, in the most world unifying sense of the word, is intensifying day by day. The Apostle Paul gives us great insight into the manner of the rise and the true demonic nature of this future new world leader in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.



Calbuco volcano erupts in southern Chile

Because of the nature of the times that we are living in today, I believe it is very important for every Christian to understand what the Bible actually says concerning the end times, the coming of Jesus Christ to rapture the church, and the rise of the Antichrist to deceive the world. Let's see what the Bible says about these things as we look at this passage in 2 Thessalonians 2:

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

In Paul's day, people in the early church were passing away before the Lord returned. There were false teachings arising about the Lord's return, much as we are seeing today! Paul uses the phrase "**our gathering**

**together unto Him,"** as a definite reference to the Rapture event. Paul wanted to reassure the Christians that, as we will be gathered together unto Jesus Christ at the Rapture, then we would not need to be **"soon shaken in mind, or be troubled"** by false teachers who impersonate Paul's writings through phony letters. These false letters were upsetting early Christians by telling them the Lord had already returned. There is growing ignorance in the church today through teachers who completely ignore or misrepresent Bible prophecy. Many are teaching that all prophecy has already been fulfilled. Others are teaching that prophecy should not be studied as no one knows what it really means. This is leading people, by the thousands, to look, not for the Lord's return, but for a new world order of peace through a world church and through a new world leader. This leader will turn out to be the Antichrist. So Paul warns the early Christians that they do not need to be



Nepal: 7.8 Earthquake, Thousands Dead  
Photo: Prakash Mathema, AFP/Getty Images

confused about the Lord's coming. There was no basis for their worry or anxiety concerning themselves or those loved ones who have already died.

***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; 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. (3-4)***

Notice Paul's warning here about deception! Jesus also clearly stated that in the latter days **"many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And**

**because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold"** (Matthew 24:11-12). Today, popular preachers and entire denominations which were once faithful to biblical truth, are now teaching new unbiblical perspectives on old, sinful and unbiblical lifestyles. Paul was essentially saying the Tribulation could not begin until there was a **"falling away first."** This could refer to a general church apostasy, which is surely happening today and is prophesied in other passages of Scripture (1 Timothy 4:1-4). Or, more likely, Paul is referring to the Rapture event itself.

Since the Greek word here, *apostasia*, better carries the sense of "departure," I believe these words are better translated, **"unless the departing come first."** Verse 3, then, may well be a reference to the Rapture of the church! I believe this is the meaning here. So, the Rapture, or, departing, of Christians to heaven must come first and then the **"man of sin"** will **"be revealed."** Thus, the Antichrist cannot be revealed and the Great Tribulation cannot begin as long as the church is still on the earth. This coming new world leader will **"sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."** He can make his appearance only after the church is raptured, but not before. Therefore, Christians in Paul's day could be encouraged even in times of persecution and when their fellow believers were dying, knowing that they had not and would not miss the coming of the Lord. He would yet return for His church! The Lord has not forgotten them! Nor has the Lord forgotten us!

***Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth (holds back) that he (the Antichrist) might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of***

***iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (restrains) will let (restrain), until he (the Holy Spirit) be taken out of the way. (5-7)***

This is clear and encouraging instruction for Christians today. Paul had been teaching on prophecy all along throughout his ministry, because he said: ***"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"*** Most Christians are unfamiliar with this passage as it is hardly ever addressed in Christian publications or venues. Paul is saying the Antichrist cannot arise nor can the Tribulation begin, until the restraining power is removed from the earth. The only power that can restrain supernatural evil is another supernatural power; and that is, the Holy Spirit, referred to here by Paul as ***"he."***

Today, the Holy Spirit is restraining the rise of the Antichrist. Yet, it is very likely the man who will be the Antichrist is alive today and preparing to take over the world through deception. Probably, there are many who are given over to evil who may know who he is and is helping him to prepare.

At the Rapture, the Holy Spirit's restraining ministry will be ***"taken out of the way."*** This is another reference to the Rapture event needing to occur before the actual appearing of the Antichrist on the world scene. As a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit indwelling you and God is desiring to use you to witness for Jesus Christ and encourage people to get saved by believing in Him. While it might not appear so to many today, the presence of Christians on the earth is a big problem to Satan. He desires world domination! The presence of the Holy Spirit in the true church places a restraint on his activities! Unfortunately, we are seeing Bible teaching among Christians growing weaker by the day! Opposition to sin from Christians today is rapidly turning into opposition to biblical truth in growing numbers of ministries and denominations. Add to this the horrible rise of ISIS and other radical Islamic movements that are seeking to destroy Christians and Christianity! This is what Paul meant when he said, ***"the mystery of iniquity doth already work."*** We Christians are certainly witnessing a great increase of evil in America and the world, as well as in many churches in these latter days.

***And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (8-10)***

Teaching on Bible prophecy is comforting to Christians because it reassures us that God is in control. Paul assures believers in this passage that the Rapture event precedes the arising of the Antichrist, and so they do not need to fear being left to endure the Great Tribulation. Notice how he states: ***"And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed."*** In other words, only after the church is removed, shall the Antichrist be revealed. Watch out for those today who want to make you feel guilty for wanting to avoid the Tribulation. Jesus is our "Blessed Hope" (Titus 2:13). We should rejoice to watch for His coming! And we should be thankful that Jesus has promised: *"I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10).*

The coming man of sin who will arise to deceive the nations with the promise of world peace will show great signs of supernatural power. Paul said his coming is ***"after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."*** These words also warn us to watch out for deceivers today who will degrade the Bible, ignore the promise of the Lord's coming, and deceive millions through false teachings.

Perhaps most today who claim they are Christians will not be raptured, because they "**received not the love of the truth.**" Therefore, they will be left behind. If they heard but refused to believe the gospel then they will not be saved during the Tribulation, but will become followers of the Antichrist (Matthew 24:4-5). In other words, those who hear the gospel before the Rapture and reject it, will accept the lie of the Antichrist, and therefore they cannot be saved. This is clear in the last two verses in this passage:

***And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (11-12)***

It is likely that the Antichrist will lie about the reason for the sudden disappearance of millions of Christians. This lie will help him gain the trust of millions who are left behind. He will build on this key lie with other lies purporting to protect Israel and the Jews from their enemies. Those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ on this side of the Rapture will be so powerfully deceived by the **strong delusion** God will send upon them, that they will completely accept the Antichrist as their messiah. People are already easily deceived about false messiahs.

Today, a major economic collapse in Europe and America appears imminent. There is growing theological apostasy through movements like the Emerging Church. Additionally, among millions today, there are great fears of: wars and rumors of wars, tensions with Russia and Iran, and threats of Israel's annihilation. The earth itself is groaning, with many earthquakes, eruptions, and signs in the skies above. All of these things signify the soon coming of Jesus Christ (Luke 20:25). It is time for Christians to begin living and preaching the truth of the Lord's coming, for the time is short! It is time for Christians to be the kind of strong witnesses for Jesus Christ that we are commissioned to be (Acts 1:8). In these days in which we live, it is high time for you and me to speak and live boldly through the power of Jesus Christ; watching for His coming and encouraging others to do the same!

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SORRY - THIS BOOK IS SOLD OUT - Reprints coming soon]; "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Revelation's Prophecies" [\$10];  
"Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Developing a Prophetic Walk...A study in the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha" [\$10] by contacting him. **Dr. Downing's newest book, "Fearless Faith, A Study in the Prophecies and Precepts of Ezekiel " is available to those taking his study class, "Fearless Faith." For time and location of this class, contact Dr. Downing thru his website or direct email.***

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