

Could an Antichrist World Leader Fool Christians?

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul teaches that before the Day of the Lord, the Antichrist will be revealed. This coming world ruler will attract followers from all over the world with his magnetic personality.

He will be a financial and political genius.

In Daniel 7, he is referred to as the “man of sin, the “little horn.” Daniel wrote, “This horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.”

He will be boastful and egotistical, a megalomaniac in his quest for world power. He will come preaching peace. But Daniel says, “through peace he will destroy many” (Dan. 8:25).

His authority will be overpowering, his hatred intense, his political techniques first rate. The news media will not be able to resist covering his every move and pronouncement—however outrageous.

He will be a master deceiver, able to make many people think good is bad and bad is good. During his administration, everyone will receive an ID number. You won't be able to buy food or anything else unless you have this government-issued ID.

You may be thinking, “He won't deceive me!” The Bible says, “He will deceive the very elect, if it were possible.”

The Antichrist's extraordinary ego will soak up the adulation and worship from his followers. Like his father the devil, what he ultimately wants is worship.

Paul wrote that he “takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.” Some interpreters understand

that to refer to a rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem on or near The Dome of the Rock.

Other scholars think the temple of God may refer to the church, since Paul calls the church the temple of God elsewhere.

Paul wrote that the Antichrist will be restrained until the right moment. "Now you know what restrains him that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already working. Only He who is now restraining him will do so until He is taken out of the way. 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 presence" (2 Thess. 2:6-8).

Paul says someone or something is restraining this coming world ruler, until just the right time. Who or what is this restrainer? Some scholars believe it refers to the Roman Empire or governments that succeed the Roman Empire.

Others believe the restrainer is the church. Other scholars believe it is the Holy Spirit working through the church. And still others think this restrainer could be Michael the Archangel.

Whoever or whatever the restrainer is, the restrainer functions to make sure the Antichrist is revealed in his time and not before. But right now Paul says, even before he appears on the world stage, the mystery of lawlessness is at work.

What's behind the mystery of lawlessness? This is the spirit of the Antichrist that has been at work throughout history. It has a venomous hatred toward believers. This spirit attacks Christians (and Jews) and tries to undermine God's plan.

Ephesians 6 tells us there are spiritual forces of evil at work in the invisible, supernatural realm. These demonic

entities deceive and lie and try to undermine and destroy Christian leaders, Christian marriages, Christian ministries and Christian homes.

What is behind the rise of teen suicide? I believe this same mystery of lawlessness seeks to destroy young people, using drugs, depression, lies and deception to drag young people into a pit of darkness and despair.

The only hope for any of us is another mystery—the mystery of godliness, which is: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Praise God the mystery of godliness will defeat the mystery of lawlessness.

Right now there’s a restrainer at work. God has said to the devil, “You can go so far, but no further.” God still has the world in His control. No matter what the devil does, no matter how evil his plots and schemes, God is still in control.

God is unfolding His ultimate plan—and those plans will result in the final, triumphant return of Jesus.

And when He returns, He will destroy the Antichrist with just one word from his mouth—actually, just the breath from His mouth. With one word, God created the universe. And with less than a word, just a breath, he defeats the Antichrist.

Paul warned about the Antichrist’s deception. “even him [the Antichrist], whose coming is in accordance with the working of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love for the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:9-11).

Paul tells us the Antichrist, empowered by Satan, will use powerful signs and wonders to deceive those who are perishing.

Satan threw everything he could at Jesus before Satan was defeated at the cross. Now the devil throws everything he has at humanity before Jesus returns.

Paul says the signs and wonders are false—not because they're not real—but because they have nothing to do with the truth and advancing the gospel. Satan's goal, through the Antichrist, is to deceive people with these signs and wonders and take them away from the truth.

So this should stand as a warning to people of faith. Don't make signs and wonders the basis for your faith or the foundation for the truth you believe. And keep a wary eye on the political stage for politicians bearing a false witness and carrying a magnetic appeal.