

Rick Joyner: We Need to Re-Examine Our Eschatology

We continue to cover the period represented by the prophetic church at Thyatira (538 to 1798 A.D.)—the darkest period in church history. It is crucial to understand this period because the roots of the “great falling away” are common to individuals backsliding or churches and movements departing from the way.

Apostles to the first-century church taught that the Lord would not return until apostasy came and the man of sin took his seat in the temple of God, which is the church. This is how the apostle Paul put it to the Thessalonians:

“Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself as God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? 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, even him, 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” (2 Thess. 2:3-10).

As we’ve covered, there are two basic teachings on the fulfillment of this prophecy. One teaches that all of this is yet to be fulfilled. The other teaches that it has been

fulfilled. However, there is truth to both of these positions. There was a primary fulfillment in the Middle Ages, but there have also been many others on a lesser scale. Again, all of these are revelations of principles that can happen over and over.

The futuristic view is now the most popular and widespread interpretation of this text among evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic movements. A century and a half ago, almost all Protestant Christians believed this had been fulfilled historically. Why this drastic change in eschatology? It is mostly because of our ignorance of history. Almost everyone who studies church history in depth begins to see the merit of the historical view, but many understand that it may still have a futuristic fulfillment as well. Therefore, it is the principles that we need to understand.

The mystery of lawlessness was already at work when the apostle wrote to the Thessalonians. What elements of it did he see in his own time? How are they operating in our time? Not seeing these, combined with the tendency of many to almost completely disregard history, has caused many to fall over and over again to the same traps and devastating distractions—including the widespread promulgation of teachings leading to the original apostasy. We do need a re-examination of the most popular eschatological views in light of history.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, the apostle wrote, “Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction.” One question we must ask is how those holding to the futuristic view can claim that Christ could return at any time? This is just one of many conflicts of an entirely futuristic eschatology. When we begin to see how both views have some merit, these conflicts are removed. So this is what we will do as we continue this study. {eo}

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