

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

Stand-Alone Sermon

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

ICEBREAKER: What one word best describes your mother?

OVERVIEW: Many Christians are fascinated with the subject of the Antichrist — an end-times figure who will do great damage to the church. Who is he? When will he appear? What will he do? This week we are going deeper with the most extensive passage about the Antichrist in the Bible — 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Although one of the most puzzling passages in all of Scripture, this passage gives us great insight into the identity and activity of the Antichrist.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Before hearing Sunday's sermon, what has been your understanding of the Antichrist?
3. Before hearing Sunday's sermon, was the Antichrist a topic that has scared you? Explain.
4. Turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. This is the most in-depth passage about the "rapture" in the entire Bible.
 - a. How would you describe the rapture, based on this passage?
 - b. When will the rapture occur?
 - c. Where will we go when we are raptured?

- d. According to the end-times view known as pre-tribulation dispensationalism, the rapture will be a secret "taking away" of the church to heaven. This will be followed by a great tribulation, the rise of the Antichrist, and a terrible Holocaust of the Jews. At the end of seven years, Christ will return bodily to earth with His church and will reign on the earth for 1,000 literal years. At the end of this time He will finally defeat all of His enemies, judge the living and the dead, and create the new heavens and earth. Does this view fit with 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18? Explain.

5. Turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. It is important to remember as you study the Bible that not every mention of Christ's "coming" refers to the second coming of Christ at the end of time. What are some of the different "comings" of Christ?
6. Does this pass (2 Thess 2:1-12) say that the man of lawlessness is the same person as the Antichrist? Explain.
7. Do you believe that the man of lawlessness and the Antichrist of 1 and 2 John are one and the same? Explain.
8. What textual clues point to the man of lawlessness being a character in the first century, and what clues point to him appearing in the end-times?

The Last Word: "There are no darker works in the entire Pauline corpus than these, and any interpretation must be at best a hypothesis."
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