

Thursday Evening Bible Study

Series: **the End Times – Bible prophecy about future events and periods**

Teaching Summary for Week 49

The Tribulation Period

Part 3. The Chronology of the Tribulation Period

Daniel's Seventieth Week

Dan 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Daniel provides three markers for the final seven-year period.

He tells us what happens at the beginning, the middle, and the end.

What happens in **the middle** of the week is the key to understanding the internal chronology the Tribulation period.

Daniel reveals that in the middle of the 70th week, the prince who is to come will **put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.**

“ in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate “

We are now examining the New Testament prophecies of the end times. We have been learning a lot more about what happens during Daniel's seventieth week – particularly the second half of that week.

We began with the gospel of Matthew: Matthew 24:1-31. This prophecy was given to the Jewish people by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:4-8 likely refers to the first 3 ½ years of Daniel's 70th week. Matthew 24:9-14 briefly covers the second 3 ½ years.

And Matthew 24:15-31 covers the same period in more detail,

This evening we will begin in verse 9:

There is a recurrence here. Verses 9-14 cover the second half of Daniel's 70th week in outline form.

Then verses 15-31 cover the same time period, giving additional details.

Remember, the lynchpin of Daniel's 70th week is the **abomination of desolation** which will occur right in the middle of the 7 year period.

In Matthew 24:15, our Lord Jesus refers to this same event, and even references Daniel:

15 "Therefore **when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),**

Jesus' description of the Great Tribulation ends in verse 28.

Verse 29 begins with these words:

29 "But **immediately after the tribulation of those days**

What occurs immediately after the tribulation? The Son of Man comes on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. This is the Second Coming of Christ.

Last time we listed the events that Matthew records will take place in the second 3 ½ years of Daniel's 70th week.

We won't repeat the list tonight, but we will return to that list when we study this period in the book of Revelation.

The next New Testament prophetic passage that mentions the abomination of desolation is **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**.

We also studied this passage in some detail last week. So tonight we will zoom in on certain aspects of this passage.

2 Thess 2:1-12

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

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2 Thess 2:1-5

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him**, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that **the day of the Lord has come**. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless **the apostasy comes first**, and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction, 4 who **opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God**. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

So verse 1 refers to the Rapture of the church age saints.

Verse 2 tells us that the saints at Thessalonica has been disturbed by a message to the effect that the day of the Lord has already come. They knew that the day of the Lord would bring destruction on an incomparable scale.

So if the saints at Thessalonica received a message that the day of the Lord had come, they would have been very shaken and disturbed.

What makes it even more disturbing is the fact that the rapture comes before the day of the Lord.

So the saints at Thessalonica would have **missed the rapture** and now would have to endure the devastating events of the Day of the Lord.

Now in verses 3-4, Paul gives some events that will occur before the day of the Lord arrives. These events had not yet occurred, so the saints could be certain that the day of the Lord had not yet come.

- The apostasy comes first.
- The man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being god.

Verse 4 refers to **the abomination of desolation**.

In verse 5, Paul was telling them these things while he was still with them.

The book Acts records this visit.

Acts 17:1-10

1 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a **synagogue of the Jews**. 2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from **the Scriptures**, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the **Christ – the Jewish Messiah - had to suffer and rise again from the dead**, and saying, "**This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.**" 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. 5 But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. 6 When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also; 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." 8 They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. 9 And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.

10 The brethren **immediately** sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

According to Acts 17:1-9, Paul was teaching in Thessalonica for **3 Sabbaths** – and only three Sabbaths! He was in the synagogue, reasoning with them from the Scriptures that the Christ had to die and rise again from the dead, and that Jesus is the Christ.

This tells us that these first saints in Thessalonica were very familiar with the Old Testament scriptures.

They knew what the Day of the Lord was, and who the man of the lawlessness would be.

So they definitely knew the writings of the Prophets.

Let's continue with verses 3-8.

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless **the apostasy comes first**, and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction, 4 who **opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.** 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

6 And you know **what restrains him now**, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **he who now restrains** will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that **lawless one will be revealed** whom **the Lord will slay** with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by **the appearance of His coming**;

Now here we pause briefly to cover two topics that we flagged last week for more study:

The **apostasy** in verse 3.

And **he who now restrains** in verse 7.

Let's not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to – and that especially goes for me!

We are faced with **the mystery of lawlessness** here.

What's more, Paul told the Thessalonian saints about these things when he was with them. Apparently they were so familiar with the apostasy and the restrainer that he saw no need to identify them in the letter.

But unfortunately we don't have the benefit of his face-to-face teaching there because it was not recorded.

Paul did not tell us what the apostasy is or who the restrainer is.

So we are left to speculate to some degree. Although there is evidence that we can weigh in decided which alternative explanation seems to carry the most weight.

In other words, **we cannot be 100% sure.**

We do know something about the chronology of these two events.

The **apostasy** comes before the man of lawlessness is revealed. In all likelihood that means that the apostasy occurs in **the first half** of Daniel's 70th week.

On the other hand, the **restrainer** will be taken away at the time that the man of lawlessness is revealed. And according to 2 Thessalonian 2:4, the man of lawlessness will be revealed when he opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

In other words, at the time of **the abomination of desolation**. And that occurs in the **middle** of Daniel's 70th week.

So let's start with the **apostasy**.

The Greek word for apostasy here is *apostasia*. It means a departure or a falling away.

It also refers to a rebellion in the last days, caused by the lawless one (BDAG, p. 120)

It appears in only two places in the New Testament: here in verse 3, and in Acts 21:21.

Acts 21:21

and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to **forsake** Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

In our passage, *apostasia* does not refer to the saints but rather to those unbelievers who claim to be believers.

They will be easy prey for the deceptions which will occur in Daniel's 70th week.

The Bible does not give us much information about what happens during first 3 ½ years.

At best we have two passages, really – any other things are established by inference rather than direct statements in the Bible.

The two passages are Matthew 24:4-8 and Revelation 6:1-6.

Matt 24:4-8

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Verse 5 speaks about many being misled during this period. This could be the apostasy that Paul refers to in 2 Thess 2:3.

What about **the one who restrains** in verse 7?

Recall that the restrainer is taken away in the middle of the 70th week.

Let's review the other passages that describe the events of the middle of the 70th week to see if there is any mention of someone or something as the one who restrains the lawless one.

Matt 24:9-22

9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. 14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

15 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

17 "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 18 "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. 21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

We find nothing about one who restrains here in Matthew 24.

There is another passage that mentions the abomination of desolation – Daniel 12.

Dan 12

1 "Now at that time **Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise.** And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" 7 I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for **a time, times, and half a time**; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. 8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. 11 "From the time that the **regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up**, there will be **1,290 days**. 12 "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! 13 "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

When Michael, the great prince of the people of Israel, arises, the Great Tribulation begins.

So one event that occurs at the middle of Daniel's 70th week is Michael arising.

But what does this mean?

In order to answer that, we need to go to the last major passage that mentions the events of the middle of Daniel's 70th week.

And that means we are now going to venture into the book of Revelation.

But first let's recap what we already know about what happens in the middle of Daniel's 70th week:

From Daniel 9:27

1. The prince who is to come will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering
2. This one who makes desolate comes on the wing of abominations

From Matthew 24:15-20

3. The abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place (holy of holies in the Temple)
4. Those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains
5. The Great Tribulation begins

From 2 Thessalonians 2:4-10

6. The man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship
7. He will take his seat in the Temple of God, displaying himself as being God.
8. He who restrains will be taken out of the way
9. The coming of the man of lawlessness will be in accord with the activity of satan, with all power and signs and wonders
- 10....and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish