



## The Devil Made Me Do It

### Part 14: Satan's Influence through False Teachers Regarding End-Time Events

In our last issue we looked at how Satan uses false teachers to draw people away from truth by leading them into a legalistically-based righteousness, arguments about controversial issues, or a sensual manner of life that exploits the law of grace. Our focus this time will be on false teachings concerning end-time events.

Even as far back as the first century, the Thessalonian Christians were troubled by messages designed to convince them that the “day of the Lord” had already come. The false teachers in this case were so brazenly deceptive that they signed Paul’s name to a letter they sent to these believers. This was very disconcerting to them, as this new “teaching” seemed to contradict what Paul had taught them about believers being raptured before this final day of judgment came upon the earth (1 Thes. 1:10; 2 Thes. 2:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1). To ease their distress and correct this false teaching, Paul explained the events that must precede the coming of the Lord to set up His kingdom, including the apostasy, the removal of the restraint of lawlessness, and the revelation of the Anti-Christ (Mark 13:24-26; 2 Thes. 2:1-10).

Both Jesus and Paul warned that the deception from false teachers concerning end-time events would escalate in the latter days as the struggle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan moves towards its climax. Key elements of Scriptural truth will be abandoned by individuals still appearing to be cloaked with the vestiges of Christianity (Mat. 24:11; Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:3-4).

As the centuries pass with no evidence of the Lord’s return, mockers will increasingly deride the belief in His second coming (2 Peter 3:3-4; Jude 18). Others will deny the deity of Christ. John refers to this latter group of false teachers as “antichrists” and explains that many of them are already in the world. They will become even more prolific, however, as we approach the end-times. Startlingly, many will be “counterfeit Christians” coming out of the Church (1 John 2:18-19, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

The most extreme deception will come during the Tribulation period when the opposite will occur and many will arise and claim to *be* Christ, the coming Messiah. Jesus warned that these individuals will be cleverly disguised as servants of righteousness, trying to fool even the elect. Some will even be able to perform miraculous signs, mimicking those that Jesus performed when He walked the earth (Mat. 24:24; Mark 13:6, 21-22; cf. 2 Cor. 11:14-15). To prepare His disciples for the deception of this second type of “antichrists,” Jesus emphasized that His return would not be something done secretly in some corner of the world, like His birth was, but an event that the whole world will see. It will leave no confusion at all that it is He (Mat. 24:25-27; Mark 13:23, 26-27).

The era of these false “christs” will come to a climax when *the* Antichrist arises and exalts himself above all other so-called deities, taking his seat in the temple of God and demanding to be worshipped as “God” (Dan. 11:31, 36; Mat. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:5-8, 12). Empowered by Satan, this person will be a master of deceit, performing great signs and wonders to attest the validity of his claims (2 Thes. 2:8-10; Rev. 8:25; 13:13-14) and will make war with all who do not believe in him (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:7). He will be allowed to exert his influence on the world for 42 months, after which his “reign” will come to a swift and mighty end by the return of the true Lord Jesus Christ, who will slay him with the breath of His mouth (Dan. 7:25-27; 8: 23-25; 2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-21). Hallelujah!