

STAND FIRM AGAINST SATAN WITH FAITH

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Thank God that He wants sinners to be saved and taken to Heaven before the Tribulation.

Suggestion: The teacher's lesson will highlight important truths in this week's lesson. After teaching, give your class next week's student lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: Paul received a report from Timothy about the church in Thessalonica that it was sound in their faith, but they were troubled by a spurious letter from Paul telling them that they were already in the Tribulation. Paul told them not to be troubled, because certain events must precede the Tribulation. Jesus said, "I also will keep you from the hour of trial, which shall come upon all the world" (Rev 3:10).

What will happen before the seven-year Tribulation begins? 2:3

Jesus Christ will come for the church-believers and take them to Heaven in the Rapture before the Tribulation (1 Thes 1:10; 4:13-17; 5:9). The seven-year Tribulation is the last week of 70 weeks of years prophesied for Israel (Dan 9:24-26). Before it comes, there is a "falling away" by Israel, its apostasy. The nature of this apostasy is Israel's seven-year covenant with the enemy of God for protection instead of trusting Him to protect them (Dan 9:27). Then the "man of sin," Antichrist, will be revealed and the Tribulation will begin.

How will Antichrist show himself to be the enemy of God? 2:4, 9-10; Rev 13:2-8

He will exalt himself above God by sitting in the temple of God and claiming to be God. This will happen after he breaks his covenant with Israel in the middle of the Tribulation. Satan will give him his power, his throne and great authority to blaspheme God and those in Heaven. He will act like a beast, will make war with believers that come to Christ during the Tribulation to kill as many as possible and will be worshipped by unbelievers.

How will God deal with the "man of sin" and his followers? 2:7-8, 11-12; Rev 19:11-21

After the church-believers are taken to Heaven in the Rapture, the lawless one (Antichrist) will be revealed. He will conquer many nations during the seven-year Tribulation and deceive many people with his lies. But when he attempts to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord will destroy his armies and cast him alive into the Lake of Fire.

How does God choose sinners and call to be saved from their sins? 2:13-14

God chooses sinners by His foreknowledge. Scripture says, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29). But what did He foreknow? He knew He was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). He knew He was willing to have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). He knew He loved all sinners (Jn 3:16) and sent His Son to be the propitiation for their sins (1 Jn 2:2).

Since God is sovereign and desires all people be saved and has provided for their salvation, why are most people not saved? He allows sinners to choose to be saved. Since sinners oppose God and will not seek Him (Rom 3:11), He seeks them and commands them to seek Him while He may be found and call on Him while He is near (Isa 55:6). This shows sinners can seek God When He seeks them. It also shows He has made a decree for sinners to seek Him. So when can they seek God and find Him? When God speaks to them through nature, through their conscience, through visions or dreams and finally through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they can seek God and find Him because He is near. He draws near to them so they can call on Him, repent of their sins and receive His gift of salvation by faith in His Son's work on the cross. Some object and say that this is a salvation by works. No, repentance is not a work; it is a change of mind. Receiving God's gift is not a work; it is accepting the work of Christ to save him. Faith is not a work; it is confidence in God to keep His promise of eternal life to all who call on Him for salvation. When they call on Him, trusting in His promises to save them from the penalty of their sins, they will be redeemed and forgiven (2:14; Rom 10:13; Col 1:14). Since God knows all things, He foreknows those that will obey His command to call on Him for salvation. Then He will predestine them to be conformed to the image of His Son, will call them, justify them and glorify them (Rom 8:29-30). See more notes on foreknowledge and election in 1 Thessalonians 1.

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