

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 17 (April 21-27, 2013)

Satan tried and failed to form a one world global government in Babylon (see Genesis 11:1-9). He is trying again in our generation. In this week's devotions, we will study his efforts and meet the man he will choose to run his satanic system.

Sunday -- April 21 (Genesis 11:1-9)

We looked at this text on June 26-27, 2012, but I need to return to it now in order to set the stage for the other devotions. Satan's goal is to set up a false system of "salvation by works" so that humans will not see their need for a Savior. Today's text tells of his first attempt to accomplish his evil plan through the common speech and language of the people (v. 1). The common language and the common speech **today** are about global warming (or climate change) and political correctness. A striking similarity exists between the two times that are separated by thousands of years. Just as **oil** was used to make tar for mortar to hold the ancient bricks together (v. 3), today's societies are dependent on **oil** to hold their economic structure together. Because Jesus is the **only** way to salvation, God is being excluded from governments in many countries because He is not "inclusive." He will continue to confuse the language and the data of scientists until He determines the time is right for Satan's global government (v. 7-9). We will look at the features of this global government in the devotions for the rest of the week.

Monday -- April 22 (Revelation 13:1-10)

The Bible calls Satan's one-world ruler by many different names, but for simplicity, I will refer to him as the "antichrist" (see 1 John 2:18). Today's lesson is the defining text on his rise to power. Chapter 12 tells of Satan being thrown out of heaven to earth where he has only a short time during the Great Tribulation to accomplish his evil deeds (12:7-12). He looks over the nations of the world that have temporarily been placed under his domain (see Luke 4:6) to find his chosen man to rule them. He has always kept a man ready for the job because he has no idea when Jesus will call the Church home in the Rapture. John describes this man as a "beast" (v. 1). I will not try to explain the figurative language used to describe him and his kingdom in this study (v. 2-3), but note that the **whole world** will follow him (v. 3). We will continue this thought tomorrow.

Tuesday -- April 23 (Revelation 13:1-10)

I never thought I would see the day when an American president would be referred to by the media as "God," "The Savior," "The Messiah" or "The Anointed One." One recent publication's headline was "The Second Coming of Obama." I won't go into the politics of all this, but I will note that the world can be swayed by a charismatic leader. Satan's beast will win the **world** with his great oratory skills and counterfeit miracles (see 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10). He will oppose God with each of his rulings and speeches (v. 5-6). Everyone who has not received Jesus will worship the beast (v. 8). Those who **accept** our Lord have their names placed into the Lamb's Book of Life. They may be martyred (v. 7), but they will be kept safe from **spiritual** deception. The Holy Spirit will give tribulation believers the patience to endure and the words to say when they face satanic rulers (see Matthew 10:19).

Wednesday -- April 24 (Revelation 13:11-18)

The **antichrist's** power and appeal will increase, and he will be worshiped by the world because he has a **false prophet** teaching the people. This counterfeit religious leader will seem as meek as a lamb, but Satan will speak through him (v. 11). He convinces the people of the earth to accept the fake resurrection of the antichrist (v. 12). He is the one who performs the counterfeit miracles "in full view of men" (v. 13). This religious leader sets up an image of the beast in the newly constructed temple in Jerusalem and causes it to speak. With today's technology, that is not beyond man's potential, especially combined with Satan's supernatural powers. He kills everyone who will not worship the image (v. 15) and forces the entire unbelieving world to take the mark of the beast on his right hand or his forehead (v. 16-17). Without the mark, no one can purchase or sell goods. The mark, as you know, is 666. In its simplest form, it means man (whose number is 6) is placing himself in God's position (God's number is 3): Satan, the father; Antichrist, the son; and False Prophet, the spirit. Thank God we Christians will go to heaven prior to this!

Thursday -- April 25 (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3)

The first verse in today's text refers to two separate events. We will be gathered to Jesus in **the rapture** seven years prior to His **second coming** to earth. When He does return to Jerusalem following the Great Tribulation, He will come with His angels as well as those saints who went up in the rapture seven years earlier (v. 1). The Thessalonians think they may have missed the rapture because of a counterfeit letter they had received (v. 2). Paul teaches that a time of rebellion will precede the Day when Jesus calls His Church home. We are seeing this rebellion today more than at any time in my life. Since we Christians are the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13) and the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), can you even imagine what the world will be like after we leave and go to the Father? As I pointed out on Monday, Satan always keeps a man ready to ascend to the throne immediately following the departure of the Church. This character is called the man of lawlessness in this text (v. 3), but we know him by another name, antichrist. We will follow his reign tomorrow.

Friday -- April 26 (2 Thessalonians 2:4-7)

The man of lawlessness (antichrist) will oppose any reference to God and will demand worship. He will sit down in the new temple that he has allowed the Jews to build and proclaim that he is God (v. 4). Right now, the Holy Spirit lives in all believers so the full force of evil cannot be experienced. The Spirit will continue to work until the rapture at which time the true Church will be called home and the antichrist will have complete control over the world's government (v.6). As I said yesterday, there is no doubt that evil is rampant in our world today, but the full impact on this earth will not be felt until we are at home with Jesus (v. 7). Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:18 to "encourage each other with these words." I already feel the frustration of living in a country that is rejecting Biblical values at every turn. I definitely can thank God that I will not be here when it gets even worse.

Saturday -- April 27 (2 Thessalonians 2:8-17)

The antichrist and the false prophet will become the first two citizens of hell (see Revelation 19:19-20) when our Lord returns to earth following the Great Tribulation (v. 8). We discussed the counterfeit miracles of the false prophet on Tuesday and Wednesday (v. 9). The people who reject the truth and walk by "sight & sound" instead of by faith will fall for these public shows of fake miracles. Rest assured that God controls the evil spirits as well as His angels. He always sends the **truth** first as a shield to protect us from the **lie** that He allows to follow. When the truth is rejected, nothing is left except the lie (v. 10-12). Read the rest of the chapter as God's precious promises to you. "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Glory to His Name!