

## **THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS**

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-5**

#### **I. DO NOT BE TROUBLED (Verses 1 & 2)**

Christians should not mistake sufferings that result from identifying with Jesus Christ for the wrath of God that is yet to be revealed against this world. (Mt 5:10-12; 1 Pet 4:12-19)

#### **II. PRECEDING EVENTS (Verses 3 to 5)**

The revelation of God's wrath on this world will be preceded by major events, including the rapture of the Church, followed by a great spiritual apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist. (1 Thess 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Rev 13:4-8)

### **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY APPLICATION**

There has been confusion for 2000 years concerning the timing of Christ's Return for His Church to bring believers to the place He has prepared for them in Heaven ("The Rapture"; e.g., Jn 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:16,17). Much of the confusion revolves around the timing of The Rapture relative to the seven-year period prior to Christ's return to earth to reign for 1000 years (commonly referred to as "The Tribulation"). Some believe/teach that The Rapture doesn't exist, or occurs at the end of the Tribulation ("Post-Tribulation"). By inference, this means that Church believers will be subject to the great wrath that God will pour out on this earth during The Tribulation (Revelation 6-18). This is not supported by Scripture (e.g., 1 Thess 1:10; 5:1-11). Others believe/teach that The Rapture will occur just prior to the last 3.5 years of The Tribulation (Mid-Tribulation). By inference, this means that the church will be present on earth for the revelation of the Antichrist and the great spiritual apostasy that will accompany his dominance of the world. This is not supported by scripture (e.g., 2 Thess 2:1-8).

The Scriptures teach that the rapture can occur at any moment, and will precede The Tribulation (Pre-Tribulation). Church believers will not participate in a spiritual apostasy, nor will God pour out His wrath upon them. We can find comfort and security in knowing that we are saved from God's judgement through faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice of Himself on Calvary's cross. The sufferings that we experience through identification with Jesus Christ are a sign that God's blessing is upon us, not His curse (Mt 5:10-12; Rom 8:14-39; 1 Pet 4:12-19).