



Old Testament Reading: Genesis 3:1-13

New Testament Reading: Romans 16:17-20

The Church Triumphant “The Strong Delusion” 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

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In Matthew 16:18, Jesus told His disciples, *“I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”*

- The Greek word used in that verse for “church” is “ekklesia,” which was not a religious word but rather a word that was used to describe a group of people who were called out and assembled for a specific purpose.
- Jesus was prophesying what would come of His training of His disciples, whom He would send out as His apostles, to proclaim

the gospel of the redemptive purpose of His death, which would be to pay the wages of their sin and restore their relationship with God.

- Therefore, the term “church” is not a building or an organization but rather a “body” of all those who have been and will be called out of the darkness of this evil world and called to live in the light of His Word, as witnesses to others of His power to deliver them from their sins.
- Jesus claimed ownership of the Church – *those who believe in Him belong to Him.*
- Jesus said He would build His Church – *not with man’s methods but by the proclamation of His name.*
- Jesus said He would build His Church with those who made a common confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and believed in their heart that God raised Him from the dead.
- Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against the purpose and the power of His Church.

However, in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, the Apostle Paul said the day would come when many of those who made those verbal confessions of faith in the finished work of Christ would turn away from the true faith and embrace the lies of a false religion. That “turning away” from the true faith is the definition of “Apostasy.”

- Verse 1 – Christians in Thessalonica were concerned that they had missed the rapture of the Church as well as the return of Christ.
- Verse 2 – Paul assured them they had no reason to be disturbed.
- Verses 3-4 – ***“For that Day [DAY OF THE LORD – THE TRIBULATION] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [ANTICHRIST] is revealed, the son of perdition.”***
- Verses 6-7 – ***“And now you know what is restraining, that he [ANTICHRIST] may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work [THE ANTICHRIST’S OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIANITY] only He [THE HOLY SPIRIT] who now restrains will do so until He [THE HOLY SPIRIT] is taken out of the way.***
- Verse 8 – ***“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”***
- In verses 9-12, Paul described the activity of the Antichrist as the ***“working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason [BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST] God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”***
- When the Antichrist is revealed, those who chose to remain biblical ignorant will be deceived by his ability to perform great signs and wonders. Then GOD will send them strong delusion – He will give them up to that which they desire – to believe the LIE that God is not God and that man is his own god.

THE TWO GREATEST THREATS AGAINST CHRISTIANS TODAY.

1. Theological Liberalism – 2 Peter 2:1-3 – *“There were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time, their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”*

There have been many names for this type of Satanic deception, but today, it is marketed as Progressive Christianity.

- They abandoned the Word of God as absolute truth and replaced it with a mixture of human reasoning, religious traditions, and spiritual mysticism, to change the way people feel about themselves and their relationship to God, rather than having their lives transformed by their confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- Progressive Christians base their faith on the Jesus' commandment, ***"Love one another as I have loved you."*** Under that banner, rather than confront people with their sins and encourage them to confess them and repent of them, they accept them, believing, ***"Love covers a multitude of sins."***
- While such liberal theology has always been a part of the ecumenical or moderate denominations, since 2006, the teachings of Progressive Christianity have infected all of the mainline evangelical churches, including the Pentecostal and non-denominational churches.
- Rather than designing their buildings in the traditional way to remind people that they were entering a place that was set apart for God's people to worship Him, their buildings are more commercial, with coffee bars, bookstores, and their worship areas are more like a theatre with a stage.
- Having abandoned the Bible as God's infallible and inerrant Word, the "messages" are more about one's personal beliefs rather than a biblical mandate.
- God the Father is so loving He would never send anyone to hell, and Jesus is our religious role model, rather than the Son of God who gave His life for our sins.
- In his book, ***The Kingdom of God in America, author H. Richard Niebur described Progressive Christianity as "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministry of Christ without a cross."***

2. Humanistic Dominionism – Isaiah 2:2-3 – *"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains."*

This destructive heresy is known by several names: Kingdom Now Theology, Dominion Theology, Reconstructionism, The Restoration Movement, or the Seven Mountain Mandate.

- Dominionism is the fastest growing false teaching in the church today. With the overwhelming desire of the people to return to a more conservative society, many of God's people may be caught up in this deceptive scheme.
- Those who believe in this humanistic and militaristic movement believe God lost control over the world to Satan when Adam and Eve sinned. God has been trying to reestablish control over the world by seeking a group of people who will so yield themselves unto the Holy Spirit that God will use them to take dominion over the seven institutions of society: government, education, media, arts, and entertainment, religion, family, and business.
- Their misguided goal is to PREPARE THE WORLD FOR CHRIST'S RETURN.
- The idea that our omnipotent God has lost control of anything is ludicrous, and to say that God needs man to help Him regain control is to humanize God and deify man.
- God is sovereign over the whole universe, past, present, and future. Everything is proceeding according to His divine plan.
- The second coming of Christ will be when He determines it will be and not when sinful man would like it to be.
- In Revelation 19, John doesn't describe a royal king who is coming to ascend to the throne of His kingdom, which has been cleaned up by His peasants, but rather as a mighty warrior who comes to rid the world of sin, and destroy the father of rebellion and wickedness.
- Dominionism is another in a long line of false philosophies of men whose vain imaginations are delusional.

- In Luke 18:8, Jesus asked a rhetorical question: ***“When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on earth?”*** At the end of the Great Tribulation, He will find more people faltering than faithful.
- President-elect Trump was given a mandate by the people to restore common sense conservatism to America. That God spared his life on two occasions could mean that God has given Mr. Trump a mandate as well. However, Christians must be careful not to get caught up in this humanistic and militaristic madness of dominionism – it is not of God, and there can only be one more source of power.