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Teaching Notes

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The Tribulation and the Antichrist

I. Tribulation Ever-Escalating 'til the End

A. Christ warns of many trials

Luke 21:12-17 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³ This will result in your being witnesses to them. ¹⁴ But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ All men will hate you because of me.

John 15:18-21 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.

2 Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

B. Church History Full of Suffering

Acts 8:1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 13:50 But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

Tertullian: "The blood of martyrs is seed"

C. Also Many Antichrists

1. many have come

1 John 2:18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

2. two types

a. political

i) like the Revelation 13 beast... crushing and devouring the church with raw political power

ii) throughout church history, the church has had a very uneasy relationship with the state

b. spiritual

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist-- he denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:2-3 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

2 John 1:7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

So the table is set throughout history for the “Great Tribulation”... many of the same themes that will prevail during that era have already been developed

II. The “Great Tribulation”

A. Phrase Used by Christ in the Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:15-22 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Christ also implied earlier a time of escalated wickedness:

Matthew 24:8-13 *All these are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.*

B. Paul's Language of Escalation

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 *Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*

Summary: both Christ and Paul speak of a terrible time of wickedness at the end of the world; a time of great suffering and trial, a time of apostasy and rebellion...

This is what we call the Great Tribulation

III. The Seven Years

A. Time Frame Taught Only in Daniel

1. the Great Tribulation is described in several places, noted above
2. but the time frame of seven years can only be gleaned from Daniel
3. however, a 3 ½ year period is referred to in Daniel and Revelation, corresponding to the final stage of the seven years

Daniel 7:25 *He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.*

Daniel 12:7 *The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the*

power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

Revelation 11:1-3 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. ² But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. ³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

Revelation 12:6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

Revelation 13:5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

More mysteriously:

Daniel 12:11-12 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

B. Key Passage: Daniel 9:24-27... the "Seventy Weeks"

1. astonishingly deep prophecy, with levels that will escape our full treatment here

Daniel 9:24-27 "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. ²⁵ "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

2. "Seventy Weeks" literally "seventy sevens"
3. most commentators take it as weeks of years
4. topics covered

- a. Daniel has been praying for the restoration of the Jews to desolated Jerusalem
- b. Angel sent in answer to his prayer
- c. focus is on Daniel's people and his "holy city" Jerusalem
- d. seventy "sevens" or "weeks" are decreed... time frame
- e. six goals
 - i) finish transgression
 - ii) put an end to sin
 - iii) atone for wickedness
 - iv) bring in everlasting righteousness
 - v) seal up vision and prophecy
 - vi) anoint the most holy
- f. first time span: from a decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah: 69 "sevens"... strangely given as 7 + 62:

Daniel 9:25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

- g. Prediction of the death of the Messiah:

Daniel 9:26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.

- h. Prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem after the death of the Messiah:

Daniel 9:26 The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

- i. Suddenly, "he" comes... the "Antichrist"

Daniel 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

- j. The one “seven” is interpreted as the period of the Great Tribulation...
seven years
- k. The first half of this span is a period of relative peace; then “in the middle”
of the “seven” comes the “abomination of desolation” on a wing of the
temple
- l. The final destruction of “him” is declared

IV. The Antichrist

A. A Final Antichrist is Coming

1 John 2:18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.

- 1. note that this was a doctrine John knew they had been taught
- 2. Paul will say the same thing in 2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 2:5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

- 3. picks up on the warning Christ gives

Matthew 24:24-25 false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible. ²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.

B. Passages in Daniel

- 1. key concept: “as it was, so it will be”... final act rehearsed again and again
- 2. four references

Daniel 7:19-27 "Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws-- the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. ²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell-- the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. ²³ "He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this

kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. ²⁶ "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

Daniel 8:23-25 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. ²⁴ He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. ²⁵ He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

Daniel 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Daniel 11:21-45 "He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. ²² Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. ²³ After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power....

3. Daniel 11: Antiochus Epiphanes a key dress rehearsal

Antiochus IV Epiphanes, "the Manifest", "the Illustrious"; born c.215; died 164 BC, ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC.

[More next time]

4. Daniel 11: final fulfillment

Daniel 11:36 - 12:2 "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. ³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. ³⁸ Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god

and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price. ⁴⁰ "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹ He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. ⁴² He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. ⁴⁴ But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people-- everyone whose name is found written in the book-- will be delivered. ² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

C. Paul's "Man of Sin"

1. comparison to Daniel 11

Daniel 11:36-37 The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

2. full passage from Paul:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶

And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

3. Key elements

- a. Comes during the time of rebellion... the general apostasy we have already mentioned
- b. Called the “man of lawlessness” or “man of sin” meaning he is completely characterized by rebellion against God
- c. Paul says he is “doomed to destruction”
- d. Verse 4 reveals his character as we’ve already noted: arrogant self-exaltation over every deity in the world; proclamation of himself as God
- e. Provocative phrase: set himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God
 - i) Implies rebuilding of the temple
 - ii) More next time
- f. He is revealed when the restraining force is taken out of the way
- g. Jesus Himself will overthrow this one with the breath of His mouth and the splendor of His coming
- h. The antichrist’s reign will be characterized by astonishing miracles that deceive the non-elect

D. Revelation 13: The “Beast from the Sea”

Revelation 13:1-8 *And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of*

the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. ⁴ Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" ⁵ The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶ He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast-- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

E. Characteristics

1. comes to power by deception and trickery
2. mouth filled with blasphemy
3. soaring arrogance
4. able to astonish the world with miracles
5. claims deity
6. dominating power over all the earth
7. rules in the end by bloodshed and terror
8. concentrated persecution of the saints
9. desecration of the temple of God

F. His Final Destruction

Daniel 7:26 "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

Daniel 8:25 He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

Daniel 9:27 until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Daniel 11:45 Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

Revelation 19:19-20 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

V. The Temple of God

A.

VI. The Future of the Jews

A.

VII. The Wrath of God in Revelation

A.