

mislead people into believing what is false (2 Thess 2:10-11). Antichrist is identified by his boastful mouth in several places in Scripture, and identified as one who *“opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven”* (Rev 13:6). He is a **lying false prophet**, a usurper of God’s authority, who blasphemes the name of God and does deceiving signs and wonders in order to deceive the people of the world. **Note well; the end time deception of Antichrist is a war on the truth of the Gospel.**

Daniel 7:25 - 25 'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. NASB

Daniel 11:36-37 - 36 "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. NASB

Revelation 13:5-9 - 5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. NASB

All of this, he does with tremendous success, because it is in the purposes of God for these very final days of the Gospel age to test the people of the earth to see where their allegiance lies. Is it with the Lord Jesus Christ and the truth of the Christian Gospel, or is it with the false economic and religious system of Antichrist, who comes *“with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved”* (2 Thess 2:9-10). He is so successful at his endeavors because God has purposed in His sovereign will for this deception to come upon the rebel world of sinners, and bring to a final end the kingdoms of this world. This is evident from the following verses.

Daniel 7:25 - they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. NASB

Daniel 8:11-13 - 11 It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. 12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper. NASB

Daniel 11:37 - and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. NASB

Revelation 13:5-9 - 5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. NASB

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 - 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. NASU

We should note well how the **sovereignty of God is in view** in our text, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul describes the terrible end time deception of the *“man of lawlessness,”* but all the while gives indication that **God is in control** of these things and exactly HOW and WHEN they will unfold. Even the great boastful and blaspheming mouth of Antichrist will serve the purpose of God in the end, and Christ will come and finally defeat this evil worker, at the proper time (2 Thess 2:8). In fact God will even allow the unthinkable, as Paul writes, *“so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”* The exact meaning of this text is in dispute as there has not been a *“temple of God”* since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This has caused many to say that they expect another temple to be built in Jerusalem, just prior to the Second Coming of Christ. To add to the validity of this view, much of the language of Antichrist in Daniel supports the idea that he will *“put an end to sacrifice and offering,”* (Dan 9:27). In fact, Jesus speaks of the *“abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”* (Matt 24:15), which seems to indicate that this is in the *“temple of God.”* To make this even more plausible, Paul uses the word *naos* in the Greek, which is used to denote the inner sanctum or Holy of Holies, as opposed the word *hieron* which

denotes the whole temple precinct. Even history itself has shown a propensity of Antichrist type rulers who seek to desecrate the temple in their opposition to God such as Antiochus Epiphanes (who slaughtered a pig on the altar of the temple and erected an image of Zeus above the altar), or the emperor Caligula who sought to erect an image of Himself in the temple of God but died before he could bring it about. There is much evidence in Scripture that can be used in support of the rebuilding of a temple, including Ezekiel's vision of an end time temple in the last days, (Ezekiel chapter 40-48), which must of course exist during a Millennial Kingdom, and its temple service only exists as a memorial to the true "***lamb of God***" (Jesus Christ), who died to take away the sin of the world. Surely in Paul's day, and also in the language of the entire OT Scripture, God's Temple stood as a great edifice to the name and presence of God in the world. It was seen as the very place where God dwelt, and was used in this sense, as the very habitation of God.

Nonetheless, that Temple was completely destroyed, in the providence of God, and the practice of biblical Judaism with it, and no longer stands for what it was, as the Old Covenant age has ended and the New Covenant age has dawned. One must give serious thought to what a rebuilt temple would be in God's sight before the second coming of Christ. Would it not be a sacrilegious and abominable thing in the sight of God to have Jewish Priests offering blood sacrifices for the atonement of sins? Is this not the very thing which provoked God to destroy the last Temple? Would God's blessing and presence dwell in that place, and is that the place where God would have His name associated as His very dwelling? Could we call that place "***the temple of God***" with a clear conscience, in light of the context of New Testament (Covenant)? If the Antichrist were to stand in that place and erect an image in the Holiest place, would that be a sacrilege against the true worship of God in a New Testament(Covenant) context?

There is another view of this "***temple***" and its meaning which seems to better fit the context of an Antichrist in the New Covenant age. This is derived from the idea that God's Temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed, in fulfillment of Jesus prophecy, and seen as God's divine commentary on the age of Judaism and the Old Covenant system. Coupled with the idea that the age of Judaism has ceased (with all its blood sacrifices, its priesthood and temple service), is the New Covenant idea that the presence and temple of God is no longer in a single place, but instead in the heart of every true believer (1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16, Eph 2:21-22) which is now the true "***assembly***" of God (or in the Gk *ekklesia*; church). Moreover, apostasy from the New Covenant now has to do with the denial of the person and work of Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord, a thing which modern Judaism already openly does (making it a destructive cult, until God is pleased to save the Jews by opening their eyes to Messiah). This changes the nature of what true "***rebellion***" or apostasy really is, which is now focused on the Christian Gospel, not on a Jewish Temple or its priests and sacrifices. The Antichrist and his rise to power and influence is characterized by a great deception of the world, which culminates in the "***abomination of desolation,***" and event which described in a New Testament context is the worship of an idol representing the Antichrist. This idolatry, where Antichrist is worshipped by the world, is how he "***opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship.***" Notice Paul describes Antichrist as not only "***opposing God***" but, "***exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship.***" This also speaks to the nature of his deceiving message, a message that opposes the true Christian Gospel (which is focused on the person and work of Christ), which obviously puts Antichrist himself up as a replacement of the true Messiah Jesus Christ. This brings new meaning to the terms "***so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.***" It could be that Paul is here using the term "***temple***"

here to speak in terms of the very locus of the true worship of God, which has now in the New Testament shifted from the Temple in Jerusalem, to the assembly of the church.

Ephesians 2:19-22 - 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of **God's household, 20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.** NASB

Further, the New Testament speaks of the work of Antichrist as a deceiving work characterized by false prophecies and false christs, who himself is obviously the *ultimate* false christ, as he will demand and garner the worship of the entire world, putting himself forward as he blasphemes God and Jesus Christ. Both Jesus and Paul warned of this great deception, both in the context of discussing the revealing of the Antichrist. They warned that the deception would be centered as it were on the very heart of the Christian Gospel, and that the focus of the deception would center on very elect of God, showing that is an attack on the essentials of the Christian Faith.

Matthew 24:23-27 - 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' **do not believe him. 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.** 25 "Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. NASB

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 - 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and **with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.** 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence **so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.** NASU

This also sheds new light on the passages in Daniel (chapters 7, 8, 9, 11-12), when we read them with a New Testament perspective. Reading Daniel with the Christian Faith held up in the background, clarifies what meaning is behind some of the strange depictions in Daniel's prophecy. In Daniel's historical context of writing, the true worship of God had to do with the Temple (and its sacrifices and priestly service) as the center of God's worship, even though we know that Daniel's prophecy had both **near and far fulfillments**. In the context of the **near fulfillment, Antiochus Epiphanes** and his desecration of the Temple in 165 B.C. was clearly in view. But in the context of **the far fulfillment**, and the great apocalypse of the last days and **the deception of the entire world under Antichrist's deceiving power**, the Christian Church is now the locus of the true worship of God, and apostasy and deception are now clearly a *departure* from the Christian Faith. More than this, **"the holy people"** (Dan 8:24, 12:7) and **"the holy covenant"** (Dan 11:28-37) surely do not comprise modern Judaism, for there is nothing "holy" or sanctified in the sight of God concerning the practice of modern Judaism, rather the **"saints of the Highest One"** (Dan 7:11-27) clearly parallel the saints of Revelation 13, and make up the *invisible* and *universal* Christian Church who are the target of much of Antichrist's rage and spite, and are clearly identified as **"those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus"** (Rev 12:17, 13:7-8). There is also another clear and obvious parallel between Daniel's **"people"** (Dan 12:1), **"everyone who is found written in the book,"** and the saints of Revelation 13:7-8.

Daniel 12:1-3 - 1 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that **time your people, everyone who is found written in the book,** will be rescued. 2 "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Revelation 13:7-8 - 7 And it was given to him **to make war with the saints and to overcome them;** and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. 8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, **everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in**

the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. NASB

The saints of Daniel in this **far fulfillment** are not primarily Jews, but the entire *invisible* and *universal* Christian church, from every tribe and language and nation and people, including believing Jews (see the attachment – “*Reasons why the saints in Daniel refer to the Church*”).

Therefore to summarize this view in the language of our text 2 Thessalonians 2:4, where Paul describes Antichrist the one who “*opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God,*” it appears as though Paul is using the term “*temple*” here to speak in terms of the very locus of the true worship of God, which has now in the New Testament shifted from the Temple in Jerusalem, to the assembly of the Church. This is supported by the text in Daniel as the language describing Antichrist’s work is clearly focused on the “*truth*” and the “*holy people,*” and the New Testament language speaks of an attack on the Christian Faith and the Christian Church. The parallels are clear and obvious.

Daniel 8:11-13 - 11 It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. 12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and **it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.** 13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow **both the holy place and the host to be trampled?"** NASB

Daniel 8:24-25 - 24 "And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And **he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.** 25 "And through his shrewdness **He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;** And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency. NASB

Matthew 24:8-13 - 9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 "**And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.** 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. NASB

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 - 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and **with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.** 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence **so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.** NASU

In fact, the parallel between Daniel 7:21-25 and Revelation 13:5-7 is very striking and reveals the church as the primary target of His deceiving work.

Daniel 7:21-22, 25 - 21 "I kept looking, **and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them** 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom..... 25 "And **he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One,** and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and **they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.** NASB

Revelation 13:5-7 - 5 And there was **given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.** 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 And **it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.** 8 **And all who dwell on the earth will worship him,** everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. NASB

This is plausible because in order to “*oppose God*” and “*exalt*” oneself “*above God*” in the New Covenant age, one must certainly focus their work *against* the person and work of Christ (the Christian Gospel), and seek to deceive concerning the true worship of God, which happens only