

Deception and Lawlessness - Signs of the Imminency of the Rapture

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Sumainyo ang kapayapaan at biyaya na kaligtasan at buhay na walang hanggan na matatanggap lamang, wala nang iba, kundi mula sa Panginoong Jesucristo, ang Dios Anak na nagkatawang tao, upang akuin Niya ang ating kasalanan at tubusin tayo mula sa ating pagkakasala sa pamamagitan ng pag-aalay Niya ng buhay ng Kaniyang katawang tao hanggang kamatayan, at sa Kaniyang pagkabuhay mula sa mga patay, ang sinomang sumampalataya sa Panginoong Jesucristo nang tuloy, tuwiran agad, tapat at walang pasubali, at tanggapin si Jesus na kaniyang lahat sa lahat, itong Panginoong Jesucristo na ito ang maging kaniyang kaligtasan, buhay na walang hanggan at kaluwalhatian magpakailanman.

- A. In our continuing study of the last days, I would like to put to rest some concerns and allay fears of people, including some Christians, regarding a rumor or a deception spreading around, that preparations are being made through screening and testing so that eventually, the vaccination of people against pandemic like COVID-19 can be done for all the 7.6 billion world's population. The plan is to start with school children even without permission of the parents. The rumor continues that the vaccine is suspected as containing other substances or chips to control people. They say that the name COVID-19 is a hidden acronym for Certificate Of Vaccination Identification with number 1 standing for A, the first letter of the alphabet and 9 is I, the 9th letter of the alphabet so that will be AI which means Artificial Intelligence. The great concern and fear now is this: Is this the mark of the beast or the antichrist with the number 666 as described in Revelation 13:15-18? How can we avoid and fight against this move which the rumor has reported that the testing has already started in France. Upfront, I say that this is a deception by satan to spread fear because in these last days, deception will increase and become more intense. Let me explain:
1. When the Lord Jesus Christ was asked by His disciples as to what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age, his first statement was, "Take heed that no man deceive you." In this age of social media and age of fake news (another word for lies), it is important to know what is the truth and truth can only be found in the Bible so that you can be freed from the bondage of lies. The apostle John in the Bible exhorts us to test all spirits whether they are of God or not. He wrote that the spirit of the antichrist is already in the world although the antichrist is not yet revealed. In other words, the spirit of lies of satan is already at work. Jesus said, satan abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks, he speaks a lie, for he is a liar, and the father of it. preparing the revelation of the antichrist to the world.
 2. The apostle Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians forewarned them, "Let no man deceive you by any means. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
 3. Before we can tackle this issue, our text from the Bible to guide us in addressing the above issues is taken from 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 1-12.
- B. The Study
1. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 , the apostle Paul's intention is to correct an erroneous teaching that reached the Thessalonians that they should not be troubled by any spirit, word or letter as if it came from Paul erroneously teaching them that the day of the Lord has come and

that they were left behind and therefore they are unsaved and they will not be able to be with their saved love ones in heaven. The issue was that, Rapture has occurred and the living Thessalonians have been left behind and they have lost the opportunity to see their loved ones who have gone ahead to the Lord. Paul in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 2 is saying that this portion of his letter is in regard to “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.” This is alluding to the teaching of Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians where he taught them the mystery of the Rapture. Ang mystery ay hindi nangangahulugan na ito ay misterioso o kababalaghan. Mystery in the Bible is a teaching that was not known in the Old Testament but now is being revealed in the New Testament. Ano ba iyong mystery of the Rapture?

- a. Jesus was speaking in John 14:1-3, where He said, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Jesus was saying that **He will come back for His disciples and receive them and bring them to the place prepared for them in the Father's house.** In short there is a time coming when the Lord Jesus will come to fetch His Bride, the Church, and take His bride to His Father's house. This is an allusion to the Jewish wedding ceremony.
- b. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he described the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. “For the Lord himself shall **descend from heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ shall rise first.** Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** (Gr. *harpazo*, to snatch out or snatch away) together with them **in the clouds** (not on earth), to meet the **Lord in the air** (in Rapture, the Lord is in the air **in contrast** to the second coming when Jesus comes to establish His millennial reign and His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives [Zechariah 14:4]) and and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore **comfort** one another with these words.” Why are we comforted by these words?
 - 1) It is comforting to know that the Lord has set a day when Christians who are yet alive and remain here on earth will have that occasion when they can again be with their loved ones who died ahead of them. This is the hope and comfort that believers will be again together fellowshiping in the Lord. This kind of hope is not in the unbelievers (living or dead). The Bible says to the living unbelievers that they are appointed to die once and then face judgment. The unbelieving dead would be like the rich man, locked down in hell being in torments with no way out forever.
 - 2) It is comforting for everyone with this hope because he/she is assured of salvation. Because whosoever has this hope purifies himself. 1 John 3:3 says, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (Jesus) is pure.” Paano? “ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, (1) denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (1 John 2:15-17), we should (2) live soberly (toward self-makatuwiran o matuwid na kaisipan), righteously (makatarungan ang pakikitungo mo sa iba), and godly (kaayaaya, kalugod-lugod, katanggap-tanggap sa Dios ang paggugol mo sa buhay mo), in this present world.” (Titus 2:11)
 - 3) We are comforted, settled, because to those who keep the word of the Lord and are patiently and eagerly waiting for Him, as it is His promise to keep them from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

- (Revelation 3:10). What global trial is coming to this whole world? This was described by the Lord Jesus Christ as “**great tribulation**”, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:21)
- 4) It is comforting for Christians to know that they will be raptured and that believers in Christ are not included in this great tribulation for the following reasons:
- a) Revelation 3:10 says that the believers in Jesus Christ shall be kept **from** (Gr, *ek*, out of, away from; for example, *ek* in the word *ekklesia* or church. Those who are called, *klesis*, are called out of sin of this world. In Revelation 18:4, the Lord is calling out her people out of the wicked Babylon saying, “ Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”) the hour of trial coming upon this world. There is coming a time of trial on this world but believers are excluded (kept) from the trials for this world.
 - b) “ And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which **delivered us from the wrath to come**.” (1 Thessalonians 1:10)
 - c) “ For God hath **not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Thessalonians 5:9)
 - d) The tribulation period is the last week of the 70 weeks of years in Daniel's prophecy. The 70 weeks is a time determined for the Lord to deal with Israel and Jerusalem “ to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. ” (Daniel 9:24). The 69 weeks of years in that prophecy have all been fulfilled but the prophecies of the last week remain unfulfilled. Fulfillment is still to come. This last week or 7 years period is also called Jacob's or Israel's trouble. (It is not the Church's trouble) “ Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” (Jereremiah 30:7) . Jereremiah 30:11 says that it is a time of rebuking, correcting and disciplining Israel which have rejected the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. “ For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.”
 - e) **The last week of years of the 70 weeks of years in Daniel's prophecy is a period when the Lord Jesus will deal with Israel to finally recognize and accept Him as their Messiah and King, and restore Israel as His kingdom to fulfill the Lord's covenant with David, that David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. Though they have rejected Him, the Lord will fulfill His covenant with David, saying, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.” (Jeremiah. 31:33-34). Jerusalem will once more be the seat of the throne of Jesus, to fulfill the prophecy that He will seat in His father David's throne, He being called the “Son of David”.** Thus the prophecy says, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne

of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:7). So we have to understand that the Church has no role during the tribulation here on earth but taken up in heaven being prepared as the Bride in the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-10).

- 5) If Christians are not to go through the Tribulation period, when does it start that we may know and we may be sure that we, the believers, are still here on earth not because we are left behind but because the Tribulation period has not yet started? Look at Daniel 9:27 which indicates that the prophetic fulfillment of the last week or the tribulation period will begin when the antichrist will confirm or strengthen or enforce the covenant of peace with Israel and many nations. (The antichrist is called in the Bible with different names: "prince to come" (Daniel 9:26) or "little horn" (Daniel chps 7&8) or whom the Lord Jesus Christ called in Matthew 24:15 as "the abomination that causes desolation" or "the antichrist that shall come at the last time" (1 John 2:18) or "the wicked or the man of lawlessness or lawless one, son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians chp 2) or "the beast that rise from the sea" (Revelation 13). Most probably this will be a covenant of peace to stop all anti-semitism of the nations of this earth and allow the building of a temple where the Israelites will make offerings again to the Lord God of Israel. However, in the middle of the week of years or that would after 3 ½ years, the antichrist will break his covenant, cause all offerings to cease and then in all lawlessness, blaspheme the Lord God and sits himself in the holy of holies and declare himself as God opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. It is at this time, in the middle of the week, that the second beast or the false prophet "forces all that would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." It is also in the middle of the week, that the false prophet forces all, " both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." (Revelation 13:15-18).
- 6) So the antichrist will be revealed to the world when he confirms the peace covenant with Israel and many nations. Historically, there is no covenant of peace with Israel yet, because the man of sin has not yet appeared on the global stage because he is still being restrained. There shall be a falling away first and then the antichrist will be revealed. Falling away from what? The falling away comes before the appearance of the man of sin or the antichrist. What is keeping the antichrist from appearing? Who is restraining the man of lawlessness?
 - a) " Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (the Lord's day referring to the Tribulation period) shall not come, except there comes a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." (2 Thessalonians 2:3) The sequence of events is that the falling away comes first before the appearance of the antichrist on the global scene and then the tribulation occurs. There is a question. What does "falling away" mean? Falling away from what? (the Greek word used for falling away is, apostasia, transliterated as apostasy;

Strong definition: defection from truth (properly the state); a falling away; Thayer's definition: a falling away, defection) Very commonly, the word apostasia is defined as the departure from the faith. The Bible has verses about falling away from the faith:

- "If they shall **fall away** (from the faith), to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:6). The word used for "fall away" from faith is not *apostasia* but *parappipto* meaning "to apostatize from the faith".
- "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 4:1). The word used for depart in "depart from the faith" is not *apostasia* but *aphistemi* meaning "cause to withdraw, to remove, to go away, to depart from anyone".

- b) It appears that *apostasia* is not used to mean to depart from the faith. There are translators like Miles Coverdale, John Tyndale, and the translators of the Geneva Bible to simply translate *apostasia* as "departure". Verse 3 would then be translated, "let no one deceive you by any means, for the day (of the Lord) will not come unless the departure comes first." Departure from what? Possibly, Paul was referring to the Rapture of the Church. If that is so, the result of the departure is that "the antichrist or the man of sin is revealed" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). It means the church will be raptured or taken out of this world prior to the appearance of the antichrist in the global scene. So until the church is here, the antichrist cannot be revealed. What is restraining the antichrist to be revealed? (Read 2 Thessalonians 2:5-8) I believe it is the Holy Spirit because the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the world is to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8-11). How is the Holy Spirit convicting the world? Through those who belong to the body of Christ, the Church, the members of which are the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). But when the Church is raptured, the convicting influence of the Holy Spirit through the Church is now taken out of the way. Then the man of sin will be revealed and the flood gates of hell shall be opened on earth. the Lord will then pour out His wrath upon this world where the spirit of lawlessness and wickedness is at work.
- c) In other words, the Thessalonian believers in Christ should not be troubled but settled, because Rapture has not yet happened and it still has to happen because the revelation of the antichrist which will begin the tribulation period has not yet begun. But by the time the antichrist is revealed, Christians would have been taken out even much earlier than the start of the tribulation period.
- C. What can we deduce or gather from the foregoing study to address the concerns and fears of people caused by the rumor about the vaccine for COVID-19?
1. Should Christians be concerned about opposing the forced vaccination which is strongly believed that it would be the platform to not only inject vaccines but to include the ID chips. Forced receiving of the mark of the antichrist on the right hand or forehead shall only be required during the middle of the 7-year tribulation or 3 ½ years after the start of the tribulation period. If the receiving the mark 666 of the antichrist is equated to the vaccine presently being developed, then vaccination shall start in the middle of the

Tribulation. In conclusion, Christians should not be troubled because receiving the mark of the beast will be required only in the middle of Tribulation.

2. How soon can they develop a vaccine for COVID-19? Depending on the capacity of manufacturing plants they will build, it could range from 5-10 years for the plants to produce 7.6 billion vaccines because the plan is to vaccinate everyone just as intended by the antichrist in Revelation chapter 13 to force everyone to receive the mark of the beast in the middle of the Tribulation period, otherwise, no one could buy or sell. At these variables, Rapture may happen between “now” and 6 ½ years at the latest or between “now” and 2 years. (Refer to my June 7, 2020 message.) This is not date setting. It is just knowing the season when rapture may occur. We cannot know the day and the hour when the Lord Jesus comes to receive His church so that where He is, there may we be also.
3. If they would soon be able to develop a vaccine (laboratory and clinical) manufacture and distribute the vaccine even before the appearance of the antichrist, should we allow ourselves to be vaccinated? It all depends. We may accept it if it is purely for immunization purposes, without the microchips which may be used for controlling people. However, I personally have reservations in the use of the vaccines because of its objectionable ingredients:
 - a. The use of cells from aborted fetuses to produce vaccines¹. The most widely used foetal cells are WI-38 and MRC-5. The WI-38 cells were derived by Leonard Hayflick in 1962 from the lung of a 3-month female foetus [2].The initials WI refer to the Wistar Institute, a body of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and number 38 to the foetus from which the cells were obtained. The MRC-5 cells were obtained in 1966 from the lungs of a 14-week male foetus [3].The initials MRC indicate Medical Research Council, a body from London. Other cells derived from surgically-aborted fetuses are: WI-1, WI-3, WI-11, WI-16, WI-18, WI-19, WI-23, WI-24, WI-25, WI-26, WI-27, WI-44, MRC-9, IMR-90, and R-17 (obtained from lung); WI-2, WI-12 and WI-20, (skin and muscle); WI-5 (muscle); WI-8 and WI-14, and WS1 (skin); WI-4, WI-9, WI-10, WI-13 and WI-15 (kidney); WI-6, WI-21 and WI-22 (heart); WI-7 (thymus and thyroids), WI-17 (liver); FHs74Int (small intestine); and PER.C6 co MRC-5 (Medical Research Council cell strain 5) is a diploid human cell culture line composed of fibroblasts, originally developed from research deriving lung tissue of a 14 week old aborted Caucasian male fetus.
 - b. Thiomersal² (also known as thimerosal, merthiolate) is an organomercurial derivative of ethylmercury that has been used extensively over many years as a preservative in vaccines. In 1999, concerns were raised about exposure to mercury in vaccines, especially those given to infants.
 - c. Formaldehyde³. Aside from ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) risk or other nervous system consequences. formaldehyde is a respiratory irritant that causes chest pain, shortness of breath, coughing, and nose and throat irritation, according to the

¹<https://bioethics.georgetown.edu/2017/01/is-it-true-that-there-are-vaccines-produced-using-aborted-fetuses/>

²[https://www.who.int/biologicals/vaccines/thiomersal/en/#:~:text=Thiomersal%20\(also%20known%20as%20thimerosal,as%20a%20preservative%20in%20vaccines.&text=In%201999%2C%20concerns%20were%20raised,especially%20those%20given%20to%20infants.](https://www.who.int/biologicals/vaccines/thiomersal/en/#:~:text=Thiomersal%20(also%20known%20as%20thimerosal,as%20a%20preservative%20in%20vaccines.&text=In%201999%2C%20concerns%20were%20raised,especially%20those%20given%20to%20infants.)

³ <https://www.foxnews.com/health/dangers-of-formaldehyde-lurk-in-everyday-products>

ATSDR. It can also cause cancer, and has been linked to an increased risk of asthma and allergies in kids. (If you are interested, you can check from the websites and other sites the other ingredients used in producing vaccines.)

- d. It also has been documented that vaccines for children have caused autism. Refer to Annals of Internal Medicine⁴; History of Vaccines⁵)
- 4. I raise a very serious concern. What if you are not a believer? That means you are not included in the rapture and you will be left behind to go through the horrific tribulation period when the dreaded wrath of the Lord will be poured on this world. A preview of the unprecedented apocalyptic events would make one shudder at the thought of going through the Tribulation period:
 - a. It is during this time of tribulation that man will greatly suffer the horrific vengeance of God and the people will pray to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:16-17)
 - b. "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." (Revelation 9:6)
 - c. "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.(Revelation 9:15)
 - d. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." (Revelation 16:9-11)

I would rather scare you to heaven than to hail you to hell. You do not have to go to hell. The Lord Jesus Christ came to save you by paying the wages of your sin by dying for you on the cross. Jesus paid it all. You can be a free man, free from sin and death to be able to live and love the Lord Jesus Christ that you may be with Him forever. This is what the apostle Paul was saying to the Thessalonians, "Therefore comfort one another with these word." The greatest decision you can do for yourself is to turn away from your old life of sinful self-centeredness. Repent of your sins. commit your all in faith, hope and love unto Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Believe that He died for your sins but He rose again to be your resurrection and your life. And by the authority of the word of God, I am telling you that you will escape the horrors of a world under the wrath of the Lamb but instead be Rapture, to be with the Lord beholding the beauty and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever and ever. Amen!

21 June 2020, Message of the Lord

⁴ <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M18-2101>

⁵ <https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/articles/do-vaccines-cause-autism>