



[Understanding the Christ](#)

Episode 23 - When Apostasy Began: Unveiling the Man of Sin

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Scott Stanley examines 2 Thessalonians 2 and Isaiah 14 to explain how apostasy began in the early church, how the "man of sin" and Antichrist are revealed, and the historical role of Caesar and the papacy in that process.

He emphasizes the central truth that Jesus is the Son of God, argues that personal acceptance of this truth destroys the works of the devil, and calls listeners to seek the kingdom of God to be freed from iniquity.

Modified Transcript:

Scriptures are transcribed directly with notations. Refer to KJV for verbatim wording.

Hi, I'm Scott Stanley with DTG Ministries, continuing a video cast concerning understanding the Christ. Now I have found it necessary to do a series of videos concerning Christ himself, because, as I pointed out in earlier videos, there was an apostasy that happened in the first-generation church. For some reason, churches refuse to talk about it. I don't know. I just know that when I was in the universal churches, no one told me this... that there was an apostasy where people walked away from the apostles.

They had come into the church agreeing that Jesus was Christ, agreeing that he died for our sins, agreeing that he was buried, that he rose from the dead, and that he appeared to many people (1Co 15:1-4). They agree with all of that. But there were certain things that the apostles taught that the universal churches, or I should say, back then, the people who went into apostasy, the people who created the apostasy, refused to believe concerning Jesus.

Now this apostasy lasts to the second coming (2Th 2:7-8), and because of that, when I began to come out of the apostasy, I realized the book of Revelation is about the people who do that, so I have a series of podcasts on the book of Revelation. You can find them on podbean.com (DTGm Revelation Studies) or go to thelamblove.org and click on the podcast "Videos for Understanding the Christ," or a podcast for a Revelation series.

But today, I want to combine those two things. I want to read from 2 Thessalonians 2. Now, for all of you prophecy people, your antenna goes up because this begins about the apostasy and the antichrist, or the son of perdition. So let me just start reading this, and I'm going to be putting the words on the screen. And if I'm talking about a verse, I'm going to have that verse appear as to where that is of what I'm speaking of.

But you really need to have your own Bible. You need to have a red pencil or something. You need to be able to mark your verses because I'm going to tell you, you're in the battle of your life, and you don't even know it. We are at the end of the world, and everything needs to become secondary to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and what it means in understanding their truth. Everything is secondary, because if you can *seek ye first the kingdom of God* (Mat 6:33) and understand what that is, he will help straighten out everything in your life.

You might be surprised when you look at the problems in your life; you might be surprised to discover you're the problem. And by accepting his truth, he will show you ways to control your thinking, control your tongue; let the kingdom of God be created in you, setting you free from iniquity, free from sin. You've got every reason out there, all of these different influences that will turn you away from truth, because everybody thinks they've got the answer, including me. I'm no different. I believe I have answers,

too, but I'm going to show you from the scripture why I believe what I believe, and leave it up to you.

You can make the decision if I'm out of my mind or not. Am I crazy or what? Well, you know, what's going on here? Why is this message coming from DTG Ministries? DTG is the "deep things of God." You find this ministry at thelamblove.org. Can't leave out the word 'the,' thelamblove.org. Go through the studies. If you're prejudiced toward your denomination, that's fine, but see if you can't be open to hearing something different and let the Lord speak to you through the scriptures.

Now I want to begin reading at 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Again, we are talking about the apostasy and the antichrist. Starting at verse 1,

2Th 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2Th 2:2 That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as the day of Christ is at hand.

2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you in any way; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (that word "falling away" is apostasy. The apostasy is first), and the man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition.

Now, in case you haven't put it together, that's speaking of the Antichrist. Antichrist is only mentioned in 1 John chapter 2, 1 John chapter 4, and 2 John (1Jn 2:18-22, 4:3; 2Jn 1:7), and you're looking for Antichrist. What is the Antichrist? Well, here Paul calls it the son of perdition, verse 4,

2Th 2:4 He will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, is sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

2Th 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

2Th 2:6 And now you know what is withholding that he might be revealed in his time.

2Th 2:7 The mystery of iniquity is already working: only he who now lets (or he who is restraining him) will restrain, until he's taken out of the way.

Now, what I have just read to you is loaded, and maybe you're going to hear things you've never heard before. It's okay. I just ask you to bear with me. Give me a chance to explain this to you. This apostasy began in Paul's day, and it will last to the second coming. This man of sin, Paul says, *"We already see this going on, and he will be restrained until that thing which is restraining him is taken out of the way."*

So what in the world do you think Paul was looking at? What was he seeing that he said, *"This man of sin, this has already begun, only he isn't here yet, but this concept, it's already here"*? Well, I want to suggest something to you. In Paul's day, there was already someone claiming divinity and claiming to be God, and that was Caesar. I don't remember exactly which Caesar in time it was, but the ones that came along after, who were sons of Caesar, claimed to be sons of God.

You could go online and look up coins that were used in Jesus' day. One of them had a picture of Caesar and "Son of God" engraved on it. So let me ask you a question. If you are Caesar, claiming divinity, and some other person stood up and exalted themselves above God, or anything that's called God, what would you do? Would you let him live if you were Caesar? So now you know what was restraining the man of sin: Caesar. Now you know what was holding him back from being revealed.

So we have a picture of the man of sin in Caesar. So what happened? How was Caesar taken out of the way? The Caesar was taken out of the way because, I believe it was in the fourth century, the Caesar became a Christian, and he became in his mind, he was already head of the state... He became head of the church, and you had such a thing called "Caesaropapism." The Caesar and the Pope became the same thing.

That is why the Caesar restrained it until that Caesar could be taken out of the way, and he was taken out of the way because the Caesar became a "Christian" and became head of the church. Now, there's a lot of detail in all of that. If you want to go look it up in history, be my guest. What I'm trying to do is share with you what has happened, what exactly has happened to the church today.

The apostasy had already begun, and then the man of sin was revealed. Now, let me tell you something about the man of sin. I believe that Paul got his information, what I just read to you in 2 Thessalonians 2.... I believe he took that from Isaiah 14. So I'm going to

ask you to turn to Isaiah 14, and I want to begin reading at verse 12. Now I know that this is about the king of Babylon, and I could get into a whole thing there. But right now I just want to key on this. Verse 12.

Isa 14:12 How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ...

Now guess what? The word "Lucifer" isn't there. That's Halel. It's the beginning of the word hallelujah. It's "the brightened one, the bright one, or the one who thinks he's bright." "Lucifer" is a Latin word. I always found it interesting that the "man of sin," or the papacy, is called "the Latin man." It just blows my mind how we've got Lucifer in here... People believe in the rapture. That's a Latin word. There is a lot of mystery going on that we need to unravel. Getting back to Isaiah 14, verse 12,

Isa 14:12 How are you fallen from heaven, O anointed one, or enlightened one, son of the morning! how are you cut down to the ground, you that did weaken the nations!

Isa 14:13 For you said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Now, that sounds a lot like what we read in 2 Thessalonians 2, but he's talking about an individual who tries to exalt himself to the status of God. So if I were to walk into the Vatican and ask the Pope, "Are you exalted to the status of God?" he probably would say, "No." Why? Well, on his crown is Vicarious Feli Dei. What does that mean? He is the substitute for the Son of God.

Now, there is a concept I want you to understand. 1 John 3 states that Jesus died to destroy the works of the devil. It says this in Hebrews 2 also (1Jn 3:8, Heb 2:14). He gave himself to destroy the works of the devil. So if you were to go read the newspaper, go look online, look at YouTube, look at what's going on around the world. Do you see the works of the devil destroyed? You don't, do you?

So what does it mean that he died to destroy the works of the devil? His work on that cross destroys the work of the devil in the individual who believes it. If you believe and

understand what happened at the cross, then the works of the devil are destroyed in you. Not in anyone else.

Paul said in Romans 3 that the righteousness of God is unto everyone but it's upon the person who believes it (Rom 3:22). God is willing that all men be saved (1Ti 2:4). He would have everybody set free from iniquity, but if you don't believe his healing, if you don't believe he is freeing you from iniquity, then you're not free from iniquity. The cross does not have the correct effect on you (1Co 1:17). You need to know and understand the truth. You've got to understand the truth so that that will become a reality to you.

Why am I saying this? Because when you look at the Pope exalting himself above all that's called God, that is in the individual who lets him do that. That is in the person who will allow the Pope's claims to be a substitute for God. Let me tell you something else. Everybody who's got a pastor who's trying to tell you what the Bible means, they are trying to do the same thing. They're becoming a substitute for Jesus.

It is understanding the truth about Jesus Christ that will unravel the Bible for you. The most important doctrine you can possibly believe is that Jesus is the Son of God, because if you believe that, you're believing God. God, his Father, told him, "*You are my Son*" at the baptism (Mat 3:16-17). So if you believe he's the Son of God, you're believing the Father, because he's the one who said it.

So, looking at the papacy, or anybody, the only power they have over you is what you give them. He could not replace Jesus for you unless you were so confused and so deluded and so unfamiliar with the Word of God that somebody could do that to you. I want you to think about it. You know, maybe these words sound a little fiery. They need to. People need to wake up and stop being deceived.

You don't need to allow the devil to have his way with you. The devil is Satan. We're going to be looking at this. We're going to be looking at him in a couple of verses. But get the idea. The pope has exalted himself above God, only to the people who let him. And above God, what do you mean by "above God"? If you asked the Pope, "Are you above God?" he would say, "No." But when he tells you his traditions are more accurate, there's more truth in the tradition than there is in the Word of God; he just put himself above the Word of God or above God (Mat 15:9; Mar 7:13).

Think about it. He has exalted himself above all that's called God because he is the substitute for Jesus. He will tell you what the Bible means. He will tell you how to live a life in order to go to heaven. He will tell you what sin is. He will define it all for you. How? Because you're letting him do it.

You have courage and you stand up and say, "You know, we're not doing this anymore. We're not going this way anymore." 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, I want to begin reading at verse 7 again.

2Th 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity is already working: only he who now is restraining will restrain until he is taken out of the way.

2Th 2:8 Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Stop. What do we mean by "*the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth*"? Are you familiar with John 6:63 when Christ said, "*The words I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life*"? The *spirit of his mouth* is the words he speaks. He has a ministry that he has given the truth to, who will share the truth with you and destroy the works of the devil by words. He will destroy this man of sin using words, also with the brightness of his coming, meaning that the devil, Satan, the lies and the deceit, the iniquity, can be destroyed by the words of Christ... and literally they will be destroyed at the second coming. So they last to the second coming, this man of sin.

But how does he destroy using the words of his mouth? Now just think this through. If you've been told lies and you're carrying iniquity in your mind, Jesus can speak truth to you and destroy the influence of these false teachers. It isn't just the papacy. It's anybody teaching the Trinity, and we can get into that in a minute. Anybody teaching that Father and Son are not real, that there is no Father and Son, Christ didn't come in the flesh... Anybody teaching that is a false teacher according to 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:1-3.

So how can that be destroyed using words? Really, the words, the water of the Word, will destroy that out of you, because the false teachers have set up their kingdom in your mind. Think about it. Your mind controls everything about you, and if Satan gets a

hold of your mind, he'll set up his kingdom in your mind. Well, if God can destroy the works of the devil and destroy the devil's kingdom, why can't he build his own kingdom in your mind using words?

You have to switch out what is false and replace it with what is true. The works of the devil are happening in the individual who has allowed those lies to permeate his thinking and control his thinking. God has truth that will destroy the works of the devil. He will destroy Satan's work. Who is Satan? Well, Satan's the author of iniquity. We see this in Genesis 3: A serpent, a talking snake, talking to Eve. The talking snake, the serpent, puts things in your mind that aren't so.

God can take that right out of you and give you the truth, and suddenly the talking snake has no more impact on you. Listen, Jesus said, *"Even as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"* (Jhn 3:14). On the cross, Jesus portrayed the effect of iniquity, the author of iniquity, the serpent on the pole. He said this. He became the serpent on the pole. So by your receiving the truth of the cross, it will destroy Satan's kingdom in you, and God will build his own kingdom in you.

Luke 17, *"The kingdom of God does not come with outward observation. The kingdom of God is within you"* (Luk 17:20-21), only if you believe the truth. The acid test that you should give your pastor, the acid test, 1 John 2:22, *"Who's a liar, but he that denies Jesus is Christ"* (1Jn 2:22). Today, that would be pagans, that would be even the Jew. But then he says, *"Who's antichrist? Well, he that denies the Father and Son."* There are a lot of false prophets out there. *Try the spirits. Any spirit, anyone that denies Jesus coming in the flesh, is that spirit of Antichrist* (1Jn 4:1-3). Two things, let's apply those two things to the man of sin.

The first one: Does the Catholic Church deny the Father and Son? Question: Which Son? The Son born in Bethlehem? No, they believe that. What about the Son born in eternity past? No, they deny that. Why would they want to deny that? Because if Jesus Christ was born in eternity past... and why wouldn't we believe it, he's the Word of God? Well, they use that verse, John 1:1, to say that he's the Trinity.

But it doesn't say that. It says the opposite. It says he's the Word of God. That word "Word" is "logos." He's the logos of God. What's that? A concept. He was in the mind of

God; he is the logos of God, made flesh. Why would they deny it? Because if that is true, the Trinity ceases to exist. He is not coequal with God. They are not coeternal. The Father and Son are exactly that, a father and son!

The second one: They deny that he came in the flesh. What does that mean? To be in the flesh means without an understanding of God. If you're in the flesh, you're not in the spirit (Rom 8:1; 2Co 1:12). Well, Christ came in the flesh. He did not have a halo. He came as a man. He emptied himself and became a man (Php 2:6-8). As a man, he grew in grace. He grew in understanding of God, and at his baptism, God anointed him by saying, "*You're my Son. This day have I begotten you*" (Psa 2:5-7). That "begotten" is "born again." He was born again. He was not begotten at his baptism, literally.

He had already been born in Bethlehem. He had already been born in eternity past. He was born again when God said, "*You are my Son,*" and that is huge, very important that you grab hold of that. He is the Son of God. He is not role-playing. He is not a trinity. He is the Son of God. That is who he is. *He was the Son of God, born in eternity past, born in Bethlehem after emptying himself and becoming a man. He is the Son of God.*

If you can believe that, if you can receive that truth and really believe it in your heart, you have just stepped outside of every church on the planet. You have just entered into Zion, the general assembly, church of the firstborn (Heb 12:22-24). The Son of God is just that. He's the Son of God. By receiving that truth, you've just been put on the narrow way. Few there be that find this, and you're in a place to receive truth that will destroy the kingdom of the devil, the kingdom of Satan (Mat 7:14).

This truth will destroy it. The gates of hell will not prevail against that truth. "*Peter, who do you say that I am? Well, you're the Christ. You're the Son of the living God. That's right. On this rock I'm going to build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Mat 16:13-18).

The way these people are interpreting the Bible cannot stand up to the fact that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. That is your ticket to salvation. The universal church will do everything to keep you from believing that truth, so you've got to stand up and be counted, and not be afraid of facing this world, because it literally is the whole world.

This message of the Son of God and the love of the Father to you is rejected by every church. It denies the Trinity. It puts in perspective that there is only one God, the Father, 1 Corinthians 8:6. *"There's only one God, the Father."* Can you receive the truth? Are you willing to humble yourself before God and say, "Okay, I finally see there is more to serving you than I ever thought? You promised to set me free from iniquity."

He gave you that promise, and he will keep it. But it's only to those who believe. The kingdom of God will be built, constructed in your heart, and you will dwell in that kingdom, and you will be free from sin because he will set you free from iniquity, and you then, at that point, truly are a child of God.