

THE MAN OF MYSTERY

"THE REVEALING"

Part 1

By: Phillip Hayes

*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
[2 Thessalonians 2:3]*

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; [Daniel 7:21]

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. [Revelation 13:7-9]

The Man of Sin! The Anti-Christ! Who is this mysterious man whose coming has been prophesied of for centuries? Is he alive today? Is there a way that we can identify him?

The angel of the Lord told Daniel, *"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."* [Daniel 12:10] Jesus declared in Luke 8, verse 10, *"And he said, Unto you it is given to know*

the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

Therefore, the Word of the Lord has declared that God's chosen will understand and know *the mysteries of the kingdom of God!* The Apostle John also gave witness to this in 1John 2:20: "*But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*" God's will is for us to know all things!

"Lord, who is this mysterious man of sin? Reveal him to us!"

First of all, we must understand that he is revealed in the Scriptures! God declared the end from the beginning. The prophets have prophesied of everything that will be fulfilled before the second coming of Christ. The Lord Jesus is revealed in the Scriptures, the church is revealed in the Scriptures, and the antichrist is revealed in the Scriptures.

Although many would direct us away from the Word of God in search of this man of sin; do not be deceived, the Word has the revelation to which we seek.

The Apostle Paul said the man of sin would be revealed before Christ came back. The first and second epistles to the church of the Thessalonians were written in AD 51-52. As far as we can tell, these were the first epistles written by the Apostle Paul. As a matter of fact, Thessalonians was written before any of the epistles of Peter, James, Jude, John, or Hebrews and Revelation. Now, this is important because the major concerns of Paul in these letters (especially the second one) are the events preceding and accompanying the return of Christ. The concern of Paul for his followers is apparent throughout.

Also, understanding that these are the first of Paul's epistles during the early part of his ministry, leads one to assume that further revelation is probably given in the future writings of Paul and the other Apostles.

Let's review what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the man of sin in AD 51-52. We will begin with Second Thessalonians, chapter two, verse one:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Although Paul is writing to the church that existed in AD 51, his letter is more significant to our time than theirs. He is writing to those that will be alive at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! Paul is very plain to tell the church at Thessalonians *not to be shaken in mind or spirit*, that the day of Christ is at hand. In other words, Jesus was *not* coming back in their life time!

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

In this verse Paul reveals two signs that will come to pass *before* Jesus returns for the church.

- (1) A falling away would occur.
- (2) That man of sin, the son of perdition would be revealed.

In the next few verses, the Apostle describes the man of sin and refers to him as the *mystery of iniquity*. He further states that this mystery of iniquity was already working!

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. [2 Thessalonians 2:1-12]

You must be spiritually minded as the mysteries of God are spiritually revealed. It is interesting to note that Paul said that the man of sin was already working, and yet he was not revealed. How can this be?

The Greek word for revealed in this passage is Strong's #602 *apokalupsis* which means: disclosure, appearing, coming, manifestation, revelation. This word (*apokalupsis*) is the same word that is used to describe the sons of God in Romans 8:19, "*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*" Here it is translated manifestation instead of revealed; they are interchangeable and mean basically the same.

The point I want to make is stated in 1John 3:1, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

We are *now* the sons of God, but the book of Romans said that the creature was waiting on and expecting the manifestation or *revealing* of the sons of God! Although we

are sons, we have not yet been revealed to the world! In the same way it is evident that the man of sin exists, and did in fact exist in Paul's time; but was not yet fully manifested or revealed!

Understanding this man of mystery enables us to clearly see the revelation of the man of sin. The key here is spiritual! Thousands, perhaps millions over the centuries have been looking for a natural, physical, singular man of sin, when he has always existed spiritually.

Listen carefully how Paul describes him . . . *"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*

The Bible book stores are full of man's ideas about the antichrist. The most popular notion is that the Jews will re-build the temple in Jerusalem, and then they will make a peace treaty with the antichrist, whom they believe is possibly an Iranian. Soon after, this antichrist will sit in the temple that the Jews built and will declare himself to be God. Sounds pretty good, but this is not what is going to happen!

First of all; if the Jews did build a temple in Jerusalem, would it be the temple of God? Let's go to the Scriptures for our answer:

Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? [Acts 7:48-50]

There is our answer! God does not live in buildings! I could build a beautiful building here in Tennessee and call it a church, but it would never be a church! Why? Because we are the church of the living God! We are the body of Christ and members in particular! We, the people, are God's church. The church is not a building! And, in the same

manner, the natural Jews can build a fine building and call it the temple of God, but it will never be the temple of God, *for God doesn't live in temples made with man's hands!*

Where is the temple of God? Where does God live? *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

[1 Corinthians 3:16-17]

We are the church, and we are the temple of God! God lives in us! This is the New Covenant promise of God, *"Christ in you, the hope of glory."* Paul asked the Corinthians, "Don't you know that you are the temple of God? The Spirit of God lives in you!" Further along in his epistle to the Corinthians he emphasizes this . . .

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"

[1Corinthians 6:15-20].

We are ONE SPIRIT with the Lord! In another place, the scripture says we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. We are the temple or dwelling place of God. This was the revelation that God had given the Apostle Paul. More than likely, Paul knew this when he wrote to the Thessalonians about the man of sin. And, as with much of

Paul's writings, a deeper revelation was given to those that would search for the *hidden manna*. I have found that the *hidden manna* that Jesus promised in Revelation 2:17 is not hidden at all to those that have an ear to hear what the Spirit is speaking. The hidden manna is right there in your Bibles, but it is spiritually revealed!

Paul knew that the temple of God was the church! Look how he reveals this mystery to the Ephesian church:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

[Ephesians 2:19-22]

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

We are fitly framed together as a building; *an holy temple in the Lord!*

Now, let's look at 2Thessalonians, chapter two, verse four again:

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called

God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Now, the scripture is clear that the man of sin is going to exalt himself above all that is called God, so that he as God, sits in the temple of God . . . And then Paul gave us another key in understanding what is happening here . . . Paul calls this the *mystery of iniquity!* *"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way". [2Thessalonians 2:7].*

Paul is describing the antichrist spirit manifesting himself in the bodies of men and women that had professed Christ!

Remember, the church is the body of Christ, the *temple* of God, the place where God dwells. Please note, that this great privilege *is not* for all mankind, but *only* for those that profess Jesus as Lord. This is important! Many are looking for the antichrist to be revealed in the world, outside the church, but the antichrist is being revealed *IN THE CHURCH!*

Paul said the mystery of iniquity doth already work! What is iniquity? Iniquity is lawlessness; without law; to transgress the law. Iniquity is sin!

Certainly, it is no mystery that people of the world live in transgression of God's laws! It is no mystery that the people of the world are given over to every foul spirit, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Sin in the world is no mystery!

But, what about the church: the temple of God? Remember what Paul said about the temple of God . . . ? *"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."* What did Jesus teach that would defile a man? It's certainly not what you eat or drink.

And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. [Mark 7:18-23]

Jesus said those things that come from the mind are what would defile the temple of God. The mind is where *iniquity* is born!

Jesus promised to give power over sin to the church! The Apostles taught the church to walk in the Spirit and they would not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Peter warned the church about some among them that were, "*cursed children, spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin . . .*"

Jude warned that ungodly men had crept into the church. He called them "*brute beasts, spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you . . . , without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the root . . .*"

The Apostle John also urgently warned the church about the antichrist spirit and gave them the key in order for them to identify those that had been given over to the mystery of iniquity:

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

[1 John 3:8-10]

John revealed that the manifestation of those truly born again was that they did not commit sin! Furthermore, those that sinned were children of the devil (the antichrist)!

Let every word be established by two or three witnesses! The clear witness from all the Apostles was the fact that God had given the born again believer power to cease from sin!

This is why Paul called the man of sin the mystery of iniquity! Sin was in the camp, and it was not supposed to be there! Iniquity had penetrated the church. There were men and women that professed to have the Holy Ghost, yet they couldn't cease from sin. Christians were turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness; (something filthy, wantonness, unrestrained by law). In other words: "they were teaching that the Grace of God permitted one to live a life of sin and remain saved by the same Grace". How could this be? Paul revealed this sinister ploy by the enemy. The enemy (man of sin) had sown his seeds of lawlessness among the believers, and many were being deceived by it.

People were becoming gods in their own eyes! They refused to listen to the men of God and began to separate themselves. They would do what was right in their own eyes! They reasoned, what authority did Paul or these other men have to tell them how they should live? God was in them, they didn't need any man to teach them! If it felt good, then do it! They didn't need any man over them, no sir! *The mystery of iniquity* had begun!

Amazingly, Jesus prophesied of this happening! Let's read His prophecy together:

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do

iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. [Matthew 13: 36-43]

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. [Matthew 13:47-51]

Dear friend, have you understood all these things? Jesus sowed the seed which was the Word of God. This began on the day of Pentecost when Peter opened his mouth and declared the plan of salvation for every believer that God would call. Within twenty years after the church was born at Pentecost, the devil (antichrist) began sowing his seed (teaching) in the same *field* (church, kingdom)! Jesus said it would happen; Paul and the other Apostles witnessed it, and today we see the fruit of that evil seed being manifested in countless men and women that profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Rather than adhering to the Apostles doctrine and keeping God's commandments, they follow the carnal teachings and traditions of denominations and organizations.

Notice, Jesus said the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one were in the same field which is the world. But notice: Jesus made it clear that the righteous and the wicked would both be in the same

kingdom: *"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather **out of his kingdom** all things that offend, and them **which do iniquity.**"* And again in Matthew 13, verses 28-30: *"He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. **Let both grow together until the harvest;** and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."* Two seeds evolving into two bodies growing together: The body of Christ and the body of antichrist.

Therefore, the wicked and the just will exist in the kingdom of God until the time of separation that God has predestinated to occur! Jesus clarified this revelation of the kingdom when He revealed that the kingdom of God was like a net that gathered *every kind*, good and bad

"Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." [Matthew 13: 48-49]

Thus, we see clearly that there would be no surprises! Jesus foretold of the time when the antichrist would sow his perverted gospel, and his gospel would bring forth tares, not wheat.

I think it is also significant that Jesus chose Judas to be one of His disciples when He knew all along that he was a devil.

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? [John 6:70]

Judas was the son of perdition, just like the man of sin described by Paul. Judas was among the twelve (the

church), and he participated in the ministry, all foreshadowing the coming antichrist in the church.

Jesus also revealed that the devil had children among the natural Israel of God. The religious "denominations" of the Jews were filled with the spirit of the wicked one. When Jesus began teaching some of the Jews that had become His disciples, they began to debate the Lord by telling Him they were the children of Abraham, that God was their Father. Here is our Lord's reply to them:

" . . . If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" [John 8:42].

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" [John 8:44].

Christians in our generation have the mistaken notion that everyone who says they are a Christian is actually a Christian. Many still believe the devil only operates in Satanism, witchcraft, and through the many cults scattered throughout the world. They do not realize that although Satan certainly rules in the obvious, he operates more effectively in deception. We must understand the vital truth that Satan not only controlled the Jews religion of the time of Christ; he also penetrated the Christian church in apostolic times and is alive and well within what is known as Christianity today!

I have heard some over the years declare, "If the Apostles were here today, the devils would be cast out of the churches." But, the truth is, the antichrist spirit penetrated the church in the Apostles lifetime! Jude said, *"They crept in unawares."* Jude also realized it had to happen for he also stated, *"Who were before of old ordained*

(predestinated) *to this condemnation.*" Please understand, the enemy was predestinated to infiltrate the church!

Paul wrote:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. [Galatians 1:6-9]

Notice, the Galatians had been *removed* from Christ by another gospel, which was not another, but a perversion of the true gospel! This was while Paul was still alive and preaching! Now, you can believe what you like, but the fact is, any gospel preached and believed other than what the Apostles originally preached will not save you; rather, *it will remove you from Christ!*

Obviously what you believe is extremely important. Therefore great care should be taken as to what you perceive is the Gospel. *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" [2Peter 1:10].* Make your calling and election sure!

Who preached this false gospel that sounded so close to the real that it fooled many that had received the truth from the Apostles themselves?

In future installments of "The Man of Mystery" we will uncover many other truths that are overlooked by the majority of Christians today.

COMING IN OUR NEXT ARTICLE
PART 2 OF
"THE MAN OF MYSTERY"