

William Tyndale's Doctrine of Antichrist

By Ruth Magnusson Davis, Founder, New Matthew Bible Project

Tyndale on Antichrist

Four points to take from Tyndale's teaching

2 Thessalonians 2 on Antichrist: How things have changed

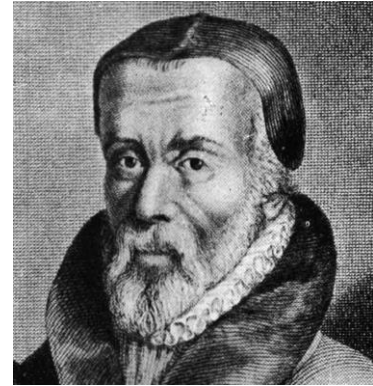
Popular beliefs about Antichrist

The error of particularizing Antichrist

The revelation of Antichrist: Hidden before our eyes

Antichrist in modern Bibles

Why God allows false prophets and Antichrists



A popular belief among Christians today in many denominations and churches is that the Antichrist, sometimes also called the sinful or lawless man (from 2 Thessalonians 2:3), is a particular man, perhaps a politician or a religious leader, who will arise toward the end of the age. It is believed that he will work miracles and wonders and deceive the world about his true identity until he is exposed as the Antichrist. This doctrine was and still is taught among Roman Catholics, and is common now among Protestants.¹ Similar teaching is found in the Orthodox Church.²

However, Tyndale laboured to show that this is false doctrine. His teachings on Antichrist are scattered throughout his writings, but the most complete was this passage from *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*:

Mark this also above all things – that Antichrist is not an outward thing, that is to say, a man that should suddenly appear with wonders, as our fathers talked of him. No, verily; for Antichrist is a spiritual thing. And is as much to say as Against-Christ; that is, one that preacheth false doctrine, contrary to Christ.

Antichrist was in the Old Testament and fought with the prophets. He was also in the time of Christ and the apostles, as thou readest in the epistles of John, and of Paul to the Corinthians and Galatians, and other epistles. Antichrist is now, and shall, I

¹ The lengthy NIV Zondervan discussion on 2 Thessalonians includes these statements: “God has a ‘proper time’ for the lawless one’s revelation, just as he does for the revelation of the Lord Jesus ... No one knows that time ... Lawlessness will be open when the rebellion arrives and the lawless one is unveiled.”

² The Orthodox Study Bible note on 2 Thessalonians 2 says, “The man of sin is a counterfeit messiah with a counterfeit kingdom.... [who] will fool the unrighteous into following him, and will be removed from power by Christ Himself at His Second Coming.”

doubt not, endure till the world's end. But his nature is (when he is revealed and overcome with the word of God) to go out of play for a season, and to disguise himself, and then to come in again with a new name and new raiment. As thou seest how Christ rebuketh the scribes and the Pharisees in the gospel (who were very Antichrists), saying, "Woe be to you, Pharisees, for ye rob widows' houses; ye pray long prayers under a colour; ye shut up the kingdom of heaven, and do not allow those who would to enter in; ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye make men break God's commandments with your traditions [*precepts*]; ye beguile the people with hypocrisy," and such like. Which things all our prelates do, but have yet gotten themselves new names and other garments, and are otherwise disguised.

There is a difference in the names between a pope, a cardinal, a bishop, and so forth, and to say a scribe, a Pharisee, an elder and so forth; but the thing is all one. Even so now, when we have exposed him, he will change himself once more, and turn himself into an angel of light.³

Four points may be taken from the teaching of William Tyndale:

(1) Antichrist is a spiritual thing.

Antichrist is an evil spirit, the spirit of Satan, Christ's adversary. Elsewhere, Tyndale clarified that Satan and Antichrist were one.⁴ Therefore, Antichrist is not a particular man, though he is personified in false teachers and lawless men – particularly in the pre-eminent ones – and he works through them and is manifest in them. The Reformers often referred to the pope as Antichrist, and in the quotation above Tyndale called the Pharisees "very Antichrists."

(2) Antichrist is now. The spirit works wherever he can through false teachers.

The work of Antichrist is always the same: to teach against Christ. In related writings, Tyndale elaborated that Antichrist suppresses the sacraments, and also that he seeks authority and pre-eminence in the Church. While he of course works outside the churches as well as within, it is particularly within that he desires a chief seat, for there he can teach against Christ in the name of Christ: a double evil. As well, Tyndale often noted how Antichrist is a persecutor. These are the things that Antichrist does, through the men and women who serve him and who are moved by his spirit.

It was important to Tyndale to dispel the idea that Antichrist was a particular man. If we so believe, we will not suspect that he might presently be among us as any false teacher:

That Against-Christ or Antichrist that shall come is nothing but such false prophets as shall juggle with the Scripture and beguile the people with false interpretations, as all the false prophets, scribes, and Pharisees did in the Old Testament.⁵

³ William Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, 4-5. (Updated: 'suffer' to 'allow' with syntax, 'uttered' to 'revealed' and 'exposed,' 'which' to 'who,' 'them' to 'themselves,' and 'senior' to 'elder.' After Tyndale wrote this, he regretted his use of 'senior' in his earlier writings and translations and said 'elder' was a better word.)

⁴ William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, ed. David Daniell (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

John Rogers echoed Tyndale's teaching in a note on 1 John 4 in the Matthew Bible:

Antichrist signifieth not any particular man, which (as the people dream) should come in the end of the world. For ye see that even in St. John's time he was already come. But all who teach false doctrine contrary to the word of God are Antichrists.

(3) Antichrist goes out of play and then comes in again.

Tyndale also taught that there are seasons when Antichrist has greater or lesser power. In his preface to the New Testament, Tyndale wrote that as it had gone under the Old Covenant, so would it go under the New: Antichrist would have seasons of power when the light of God's word would be darkened. Before the Reformation, Antichrist had been entrenched in power in the Roman Catholic Church for a long time and had almost abolished the word. Tyndale prophesied that after the Reformation, he would return. This brings us to the fourth point.

(4) Antichrist was bound to come on the heels of the Reformation in a new disguise.

Tyndale foresaw that after Antichrist had been exposed in the Roman Church and people had the Bible in their own languages, he would disguise himself with new names and garb, pose as an angel of light, and begin again to darken the word and truth of God. This has occurred through various means, and it began very soon after the Reformation.⁶ It has come to pass that the pure word is significantly darkened in some of the worst modern Bibles. For example, there are revisions to Daniel 9:27 which destroy the traditional understanding that this passage was a prophecy of Christ. Instead, they present it as a prophecy of Antichrist who is still to come.⁷ This is part of the mix of falsehoods in modern Bibles which contribute to the doctrine of a future Antichrist. Indeed, these falsehoods reveal the influence of Antichrist, who is gaining power as apostasy grows.

Along with the departing from truth in post-Reformation Bible translations goes a departing in practice. Many modern churches or denominations are completely apostate. I was once invited to a course called "Why We Don't Have to Believe the Bible" in a local Anglican church. Antichrist is manifest in such apostasy, and his servants are manifest, for those who have eyes to see.

2 Thessalonians 2 on Antichrist: How Things Have Changed

Chapter 2 of Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians describes Antichrist. It is a difficult and mysterious passage, but it is generally accepted that here Paul was warning first-century believers not to think that the second coming of the Lord was at hand, because first there must be a "departing," or apostasy. Below I compare the KJV, which followed

⁶ See Davis, *The Story of the Matthew Bible: Part 2, The Scriptures Then and Now*. In this book I review many revisions of concern that were made to the original Scripture translations of Tyndale and Myles Coverdale, when their work served as the base for later Bibles – especially the Geneva Bible and (through the KJV) the Revised Version. Both of those versions were motivated by a desire to rework or re-annotate certain Scriptures in accordance with the beliefs and views of the revisers. This is manifest from their own words in their Bible prefaces and dedications, and from a proper examination of the translations themselves. The complete 1560 Geneva Bible dedication to Queen Elizabeth I is attached as an appendix to *Story Part 2*.

⁷ See my blog post on this question at <https://baruchhousepublishing.com/the-prohecy-of-daniel-927>.

the Geneva Bible (GNV) closely, with Tyndale’s 1534 translation.⁸ Note the changed verb tenses in verses 3 and 7. In these verses the translators added the words that are underlined, which are relevant to the discussion:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-7	
<p>William Tyndale</p> <p>1 We beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in that we shall assemble unto him,</p> <p>2 that ye be not suddenly moved from your mind, and be not troubled, neither by spirit, neither by words, nor yet by letter which should seem to come from us, as though the day of Christ were at hand.</p> <p>3 Let no man deceive you by any means, for <u>the Lord cometh not</u>, except there come a departing first, and that that sinful man be opened [<i>revealed</i>], the son of perdition,</p> <p>4 which is an adversary, and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he shall sit as God in the temple of God, and show himself as God.</p> <p>5 Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?</p> <p>6 And now ye know what withholdeth, even that he might be uttered [<i>manifested</i>] at his time.</p> <p>7 <i>For the mystery of that iniquity doth he already work, which only locketh until it be taken out of the way.</i></p>	<p>KJV</p> <p>1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,</p> <p>2 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.</p> <p>3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for <u>that day shall not come</u>, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;</p> <p>4 Who opposeth and exaltheth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.</p> <p>5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?</p> <p>6 And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.</p> <p>7 <i>For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [GNV withholdeth], will let until he be taken out of the way.</i></p>

This passage teaches that before the Lord comes, there must be a departing or apostasy from God’s word. This departing will manifestly reveal the “sinful man.” In the Matthew Bible, John Rogers had a note on verse 3 explaining that this “man” is Antichrist. The great departing that will precede the second coming of Christ will be the apostasy of the entire world from God’s word and gospel, which by that time will have gone forth everywhere. However, Tyndale’s present tense in verses 3 and 7, which is called the *timeless present*, allows the additional understanding that apostasy characteristically precedes the coming of the Lord (“the Lord cometh not, except there come a departing first”). This is consistent with Tyndale’s doctrine of Antichrist.

⁸ I used Tyndale’s 1534 translation instead of his 1535 GH revision. I did this mainly because it best expresses his understanding of the meaning of this passage, and also because it is the translation that most people are familiar with, through reading David Daniell’s modern-spelling edition of Tyndale’s 1534 New Testament. Verse 7 in Tyndale’s 1535 revision reads, “For the mystery of the iniquity doeth already work: till he which now only letteth, be taken out of the way.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3 in the KJV follows the GNV and uses “shall,” which is understood prophetically as pointing to the future (“that day shall not come”). It therefore appears to limit the application of the verse to a future time. Further, “that” is a demonstrative adjective which emphatically points to just one particular day.

In verse 7, the KJV again followed the GNV and used the future tense, though, according to Green’s Interlinear Bible, the Greek verbs were in the present. Green’s literal translation reads, “For mystery already *works* of lawlessness, only he *restraining now*, until out of the midst *it comes*.” Tyndale was more literal than the literal Bibles were, and it helped. The GNV and KJV made it easier to believe that Antichrist is only a future thing and cannot now be known.

Verse 4 describes how Antichrist presents himself and is exalted. Here Rogers’ note explains what it means to sit in the temple of God:

Matthew Bible note on 2 Thessalonians 2:4: To sit in the temple of God is to rule in the consciences of men, and there to command, where God only hath place and ought only to reign: which is as much as to be exalted above God.

If Antichrist has attained a high seat – political or ecclesiastical or both – then he has power to rule in people’s consciences, put evil for good, teach against Christ, and persecute Christ’s people.

In verses 6-7, Paul speaks of a force or power that is withholding; the Greek is the verb *katēcho*. Tyndale translated this verb “withhold” and “lock.” Others have “let” (=withhold/hinder); “restrain,” and “hold back.” Tyndale understood Paul to be saying that this withholding is an unholy power for evil, and is the work of Antichrist, who withholds or locks up God’s word and truth. However, most modern evangelicals, along with also the Orthodox Church, understand the verse in an opposite sense: that the withholding is a holy power for good and works *against* Antichrist. This interpretation leads to uncertainty about who or what this holy restrainer is. Some say it is the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in a future rapture say the holy restrainer is the church – whatever they mean by that – and when the church is raptured and taken away, Antichrist will assume power and finally be known.

Popular beliefs about Antichrist

Two key questions are, who is the “he” who withholds? (v.6), and what or who will be “taken out of the way”? (v.7). There are a variety of answers; below is a sampling:

- Tyndale and Antwerp doctrine: The “he” who withholds is the unholy Antichrist, the evil spirit. The “it” to be taken out of the way is the mystery of iniquity, which is the suppression or corruption of God’s word, thus withholding the word from the people. (If “he” is put for “it” in verse 7, as Tyndale had in his final revision to this verse [see footnote 8 above], it means Antichrist will be taken out of the way.)
- Puritan (especially in the 16th and 17th centuries): The “he” who withholds is Antichrist, which is papal Church of Rome and her empire of Romish Churches. Therefore, in Puritan doctrine the “he” to be taken out of the way was the unholy papal empire in all the countries where the Roman Church held sway. Puritan ministers

believed that once this was accomplished, they, pursuant to prophecy, would lead the Church of Christ to prominence in the world (see the quotations below from the Geneva Bible). They further believed and taught that the Church of England, as constituted with the Book of Common Prayer and headed by the English monarch and bishops, was Romish, tyrannical, and the very domain of Antichrist.⁹

- Orthodox Church: The “he” who withholds is the holy restrainer. (However, his identity is unclear to me; perhaps the Holy Spirit is meant.) The “he” to be taken out of the way is the future Antichrist, the mystery man, whom Jesus will destroy at the Second Coming. (This is as taught in the Orthodox Study Bible, see page 1, note 2).
- Modern, various denominations: The “he” who withholds is the church, the holy restrainer. The “he” to be taken out of the way is this church (i.e. believers in the church), who will be removed from earth in a miraculous rapture.

Thus there is confusion and disagreement. And that is not the end of it. A Roman Catholic website I found teaches that 2 Thessalonians 2 is best understood to refer to one of the early Roman emperors; however, since there may be multiple fulfillments of a single prophecy, it may also point forward to an individual at the end of time who will be like the early Roman emperors.¹⁰ My understanding is that some modern Protestants limit the application of 2 Thessalonians 2 entirely to the past, believing that Antichrist was the emperor Nero. In this view, the “he” to be taken out of the way was Nero, and since he is long gone, it would seem that the sinful man is no longer a threat.

Except for the doctrine of Tyndale and the Matthew Bible, all these teachings place Antichrist in any place or time other than where the men or women who teach them are. Thus, failing to warn that we must watch for Antichrist among us, they lull people to sleep.

The error of particularizing Antichrist

As mentioned, the Puritans in England, who led the insurrection of the 17th century, put Antichrist only in Rome and in so-called Romish Churches. Therefore, according to their doctrine, Antichrist was not anyone who teaches false doctrine, but the popes, priests, and adherents of the enemy empire. This is the error of *particularizing* Antichrist, of putting him in only one particular place: in this case, papal Rome and her alleged vassal churches. Emphasis on the Roman Church as the abode of Antichrist intensified in the 1599 Geneva Bible, as did inflammatory vitriol against the pope and his “hellish spirits” with their “cunning, mischief, impudent rage, fraudulence, venomousness,” and so forth – all of which and more is contained in just one Geneva note on Revelation 9:7. A note on 2 Thessalonians 2 defines Antichrist as “whosoever shall occupy that seat that falleth away from God” (n1), while another says that when the secular Roman empire was to pass, then “the seat that falleth away from God shall succeed and shall hold his place” (n2). This points to the papal chair. A further note points to the pope as the one who “is now [i.e. in 1599] in authority and ruleth all, to wit, the Roman Empire” (n3).

⁹ This is how they taught in their widely published “Admonitions to Parliament” and other documents that led up to the 17th-century Puritan revolution. All this, along with much forgotten history, is clearly shown, with quotations from the Admonitions and the Geneva Bible notes, in *Story Part 2*.

¹⁰ From “Catholic Answers” at <https://shop.catholic.com/blog/who-is-the-antichrist>. Accessed Feb 12 2021.

Other GNV notes presented the Puritans as God's warriors against Antichrist, such as one which said the Spirit of God's mouth that would consume the wicked one was the powerful preaching of the "true Ministers of the word [who] are as a mouth, whereby the Lord breatheth out that mighty and everlasting word, which shall break his enemies in sunder, as it were an iron rod" (n4 on 2Th.2:8 It was characteristic of the Puritans to present the Lord's word as a means of divine vengeance and destruction much more than as the means of divine mercy and salvation.)

The Puritan teaching inflamed simple English people with a superstitious fear and hatred of Roman Catholics and "Romish" Anglicans, who, they imagined, were the very brood of Antichrist. Blinded by falsehood, they believed that the Puritan insurrection against King Charles and the prelates of the English Church was a pious battle against Antichrist to advance the interest of Christ.¹¹ The leading revolutionary Oliver Cromwell prosecuted an Anglican cleric in Ireland for using the Book of Common Prayer and resisting "that interest which the Lord Jesus is now bringing forth in the world."¹² Believing himself to be a "Puritan Moses," Cromwell led the charge to overthrow King Charles I and had a leading hand in his murder - all supposedly for the glory of Christ.

Puritanism put evil for good, including the evil of insurrection for the interest of Christ. The prominent Puritan John Owen defended and approved of the regicide. He praised Cromwell as a "Mosaic deliverer," and described the revolution as England's "exodus" and a turning point in the "downfall of Antichrist."¹³ After Charles was beheaded, Owen delivered a triumphant sermon to the Rump Parliament. One of the deceptions at the root of the murderous Puritan insurrection was the error of particularizing Antichrist.

The Orthodox and modern doctrines also particularize Antichrist, by making him to be one man only and putting him in the future only. This also leads to fear, and to vain speculations about who the mystery man might be. It is diabolical twist to say that the churches in which Antichrist is growing in influence and power are holding him back. He has blinded us again.

The revelation of Antichrist: Hidden before our eyes

Antichrist, by placing himself in another church, another time, another religion, etc., turns our eyes away from himself so that we cannot identify him in our midst. This is one of the things that makes his iniquity such a mystery; his identity is not a mystery, but the iniquity that he works is the mystery.

Tyndale observed that, just as the Jewish people missed the Messiah when he came and are still looking for him to come later, so Christians miss Antichrist because they are looking for a mystery man to come later, and because they do not look in the Scriptures:

The Jews look for Christ, and he is come fifteen hundred years ago, and they are not aware: we also have looked for Antichrist, and he hath reigned as long, and we are

¹¹ See Davis, *Story Part 2*, 113f.

¹² *Ibid.*, 124-25. Also 157, concerning how Cromwell's troops destroyed copies of the Book of Common Prayer.

¹³ Mark Jones and Kelly M. Kopic, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 234.

not aware – and that because [we] looked carnally for him, and not in the places where we ought to have sought. The Jews would have found Christ verily if they had sought him in the law and the prophets, whither Christ sendeth them to seek (Joh. 5). We also would have spied out Antichrist long ago if we had looked in the doctrine of Christ and his apostles.¹⁴

Antichrist was manifest in the violence and vitriol of the Puritan revolution. People forgot that the Bible exhorts leaders in the Church to “warn the people to submit themselves to rule and authority, to obey the officials, to be ready for all good works, to speak evil of no one, and not to be fighters, but soft, showing all gentleness to all people” (Tit. 3:1-2). But Antichrist is also evident in the gentler apostasy of mainstream western churches today. He has come in a worldly guise to congregations that, bereft of the Holy Spirit, not only wink at sin, but celebrate, bless, and promote it, and join hands with the world in the name of love and tolerance. The evil spirit is also at work in Charismatic Churches, where people are led by false prophets to engage in occult spiritual practices that invite demonic activity into their lives, not realizing how dangerous and occult they are.¹⁵

While Christians can often identify a departing or apostasy as unchristian, they cannot identify it as a revelation of Antichrist because they think he is yet to come: thus he is hidden right before our eyes.

Antichrist in modern Bibles

Modern Bibles have assisted Antichrist to remain hidden before our eyes by changing 2 Thessalonians 2:7 so that it teaches about a holy restrainer who is now holding him back:

2 Thessalonians 2:7

RV For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way.

RSV For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. (Also **NASB, ESV**)

NEB For already the secret power of wickedness is at work, secret only for the present until the Restrainer disappears from the scene.

JB Rebellion is at its work already, but in secret, and the one who is holding it back has first to be removed before the Rebel appears openly.

NKJV For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way

NJB 1985 The mystery of wickedness is already at work, but let him who is restraining it once be removed, and the wicked One will appear openly.

NIV 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.

¹⁴ Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon*, 5. (Updated: syntax, subjunctive.)

¹⁵ In *True to His Ways: Purity & Safety in Christian Spiritual Practices* (Canada: Baruch House Publishing, 2006), I show the eerie parallels between the spiritual practices of kundalini yoga devotees and Charismatics. For example, in Charismatic congregations, people are “slain in the spirit,” which mirrors the experience of yoga practitioners in a ritual known as “shaktipat.” There are also parallels between shamanic and Charismatic practices.

OSB For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

The capital “H” in “He” in some of the modern versions suggests that the Holy Spirit is the restrainer. Thus these Bibles advance the very error refuted by Tyndale. It has come to pass, since the change of verb tense that was first introduced in the Geneva Bible, that incremental revisions to the Scriptures have brought us to the point where 2 Thessalonians 2:7 unambiguously advances the very doctrine opposed by the original translator. Tyndale once wrote that “Antichrist turneth the root of the tree upward,” and so it has happened to his own work.

Why God allows false prophets and Antichrists

Satan is God’s servant, and can do no more than God allows him to do. (John Rogers)

In his book *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale answered the difficult question of why God allows Antichrist to teach false doctrine and bring people under his influence and power, with reference to 2 Thessalonians 2:

What is the cause of this, and that they also teach false doctrine, confirming it with lies? Verily, it is the hand of God to avenge the wickedness of them that have no love nor desire for the truth of God when it is preached, but rejoice in unrighteousness. This thou mayest see in the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, where he speaketh of the coming of Antichrist: Whose coming shall be (saith he) by the working of Satan with all miracles, signs, and wonders, which are but lies, and in all deceptive unrighteousness among them that perish, because they received not any love nor desire for the truth, to have been saved. Therefore shall God send them strong delusion, to believe lies. Mark how God, to avenge his truth, sendeth false doctrine to the unthankful.¹⁶

The sending of false doctrine is, therefore, God’s judgement on those who do not love the truth – who do not welcome it or cherish it. By this means, both false teachers and their followers are judged. Tyndale’s marginal note on 2 Thessalonians 2 said, “Where there is no love for the truth, God lets slip false prophets to deceive the people.” The apostle Paul wrote, “Let no one deceive you with vain words. For through such things comes the wrath of God upon the children of unbelief” (Eph. 5:6). To receive lies reveals that one is not a child of truth, but of unbelief (innocent error excepted).

Many Scriptures touch on the different aspects of this mysterious, divine judgement. Jesus said, “I have come for judgement into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see, may be made blind” (Joh. 9:39). False doctrine separates the wheat and the chaff: false teachers and brethren leave the right way “so that it might appear that they were not of us” (1Jo. 2:19). Paul said there must be sects, so that those who are sound in the faith may be known (1Co. 11:19). People speak against Christ so that the thoughts of their hearts may be revealed (Lu. 2:35). Unrighteousness will vindicate God’s judgement on the world and prove his judgements true (Ro. 3:6). The evil speaking of the Pharisees and Jewish leaders against Christ, and their forbidding the apostles to preach, showed that

¹⁶ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 56. (Updated: ‘as’ to ‘this,’ ‘lust’ to ‘desire,’ ‘deceivable’ to ‘deceptive,’ syntax.)

the judgement of God was upon them to the utmost (1Th. 2:16). The false prophets were marked out long ago for judgement (Jude 1:4). The prophet Daniel wrote that the Antichrist would prosper in his evil speaking “till the wrath of God be fulfilled” (Dan. 11:36).

Thus God allows lies in order to fulfil his wrath on the enemies of truth and righteousness, and in evil times we are seeing his judgement in action. Understanding this makes those times easier to bear: blessed is the person whom the Lord instructs in his law, to give him patience in the time of adversity, until the pit is dug for the ungodly (Ps. 94:12-13). And blessed is he when he is persecuted by those who are under God’s judgement, who are digging their own pit; such persecution shows that he has been counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which we must suffer in this life (2Th. 1:4-5). Again, blessed are the righteous whom the world thrusts away and abhors, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Lu. 6:22). Thus God works both judgement and blessing in his mysterious ways; especially, he proves the wicked to be wicked and the worthy to be worthy – and when that final day comes, and the time for the final judgement, he will be justified.

No doubt lawlessness will be open when the Lord returns, and apostasy widespread. Many will mistake evil for good and lies for truth, even as they do now because the word of the Lord is trampled underfoot. This iniquity reveals the Antichrist, the spirit of the adversary.

Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)



© R. Magnusson Davis. This paper was first published in 2012. A major revision was done in February 2021.



Ruth M. Davis is a retired lawyer and conservative Christian. In 2009 she founded the New Matthew Bible (NMB) Project, dedicated to gently updating the 1537 Matthew Bible for today. The NMB New Testament has now been published as *The October Testament*. Ruth also published *The Story of the Matthew Bible* in two parts. Part 1 is about the making of the MB. Part 2 follows revisions to the Scriptures to the present time, with a close examination of the Geneva Bible and the Revised Version.