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The Great Deception at the End of the Age

“God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe [the] lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth.” [2 Thessalonians 2:11-12](#)

By Mike Wingfield

Have you ever noticed how eerily dark it gets immediately before a big storm comes? Spiritually speaking, our world is getting very dark, and the great storm of a tumultuous period known as the Tribulation is rapidly approaching. According to the Bible, this will be a very violent storm of God's wrath that will devastate the world and all that is in it. When this storm is over, the overwhelming majority of the global population will be dead. This great and unparalleled devastation due to the plagues of God's wrath will dramatically change the planet. Man's lifestyle will be critically altered.

I admit that these statements are shocking comments that we would rather not deal with. It is disturbing to our human spirit and it threatens us to our very core. However, God's Word repeatedly warns us that this is the future of our world. Furthermore, history is repeating itself. God has already judged the world as described above. God's fury against man's rebellion became so great that during the days of Noah, He

sent a global flood that killed all but eight people who were safely aboard the ark. When it was all done, the world was strewn with debris and devastation.

Jesus said, ***“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”*** ([Matthew 24:37](#)). The nature of the culture in Noah's time has been perfectly duplicated once again. In Noah's day, the world was locked into a cycle of deadly violence. Two times in Genesis 6, the Bible declares, ***“the earth was filled with violence”*** ([Genesis 6:11, 13](#)). The same text states three times that the entire world was morally ***“corrupt”*** ([Genesis 6:11-12](#)). [Genesis 6:5](#) seems to be a commentary that summarizes the spiritual climate of the world, ***“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*** The rebellion of man had saturated the entire earth. It included all the people

[except the eight righteous on the ark], over all the earth, and it was taking place all of the time.

How did the world arrive at such a horrific spiritual condition? This is a very important question. The biblical answer to this question will help us to put into perspective what is happening today.

The Bible declares that Noah represented the 10th generation after creation. [Genesis 5](#) gives the genealogy of man from Adam to Noah. The New Testament confirms this genealogy. [Jude 14](#) says that Enoch, Noah's great-grandfather, was of the seventh generation. Adam was still alive during the lifetime of Enoch. According to the chronology in Genesis 5, Enoch was 308 when Adam died at the age of 930.

The Bible tells us that when Enoch was 65 years old, he and his wife had a son, whom they named Methuselah. Something very unique must have happened to Enoch when his son was born. The Bible says that *“Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years”* ([Genesis 5:22](#)). Something occurred at this time that had a spiritual impact upon Enoch, causing him to begin to walk with God. What was it? The Bible gives us a strong hint. The Hebrew name *“Methuselah”* means “when he dies, it shall be sent.” We cannot pretend to know all of the details, but it is apparent that God must have supernaturally communicated with Enoch that due to man's wickedness, He was going to bring a massive judgment upon all of the earth. This revelation had an incredible impact on the life of Enoch. Wickedness was rampant upon the earth during his time. [Jude 14-15](#) indicates that Enoch began preaching a message of repentance to his generation 969 years before the flood. Jude tells us that the central theme of his message was that the Lord was about to *“execute judgment upon all”* (Jude 15). Enoch's message of warning was a message of mercy from God. God was using him to mercifully call people to repentance to escape the impending judgment that was coming upon the earth.

We know that Methuselah was 969 years old when he died. We also know from the information given to us in Genesis 5-7 that Methuselah died the year that the flood came, just as God had told Enoch. However, we need to remember that Enoch did not know when his son would die. All he knew was that when his son would die, God would execute judgment upon all of mankind. Therefore, as a man who walked with God, he must have wondered every day, “could this be the day?” God rewarded this man's faithfulness. Enoch must have preached and warned his generation for 300 years. Then, the Bible says, one day *“he was not; for God took him”* ([Genesis 5:24](#)). What does this mean? [Hebrews 11:5](#) tells us, *“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.”* The word *“translated”* simply means he was transported from one place to another. He was taken from this earth and supernaturally transported to heaven into the presence of the One he had walked with on earth for 300 years. You could say that Enoch was raptured. He was snatched out of this world by the One who loved him. What a testimony and what a reward!

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According to the information given to us in [Genesis 5](#), Noah was born 69 years after his great-grandfather, Enoch, was taken to heaven. Certainly, some family members and friends would have informed Noah about the great legacy of Enoch. No doubt, they all had heard him preach and remembered how he had warned them to repent. His memory and sudden supernatural disappearance were probably a

lingering topic of conversation. We cannot really know this for sure. But what we do know is that ***“Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD”*** ([Genesis 6:8](#)). The message of the righteousness and the mercy of God had somehow found its way to be sown in the heart of Enoch’s great-grandson. That seed took root and grew.

The Bible tells us that in some ways, Noah was a carbon copy of his great-grandfather. The Scriptures testify that Noah was a righteous man of great faith ([Hebrews 11:7](#)). [Genesis 6:9](#) says that he ***“was a just man and perfect in his generations.”*** Like his great-grandfather, he also ***“walked with God”*** ([Genesis 6:9](#)). Following in the shoes of Enoch, Noah too was ***“a preacher of righteousness”*** and was warning his generation of the impending judgment of God ([2 Peter 2:5](#)). Like Enoch, Noah also received a revelation from God about an approaching divine global judgment. This time God told Noah exactly what he was going to do. God spoke directly to him and said, ***“And behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and everything that is in the earth shall die”*** ([Genesis 6:17](#)). In the same spirit of Enoch, Noah was moved by this revelation. [Hebrews 11:7](#) says, ***“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”***

The reason that God was patient in Noah’s day and today is because in His mercy His messengers are still warning of the coming judgment, and still calling people to repentance to be saved.

Noah was 480 years old when God gave him the revelation about the flood and told him to build the ark. Noah, along with his three sons a few years later, labored for 120 years to build the ark. I am

sure that Noah must have kept preaching and warning people. That is what righteous preachers do. He must have kept looking at his grandfather, Methuselah, and kept wondering how much longer he would live. He knew, just as his great-grandfather had preached, when Methuselah would die, then, the flood would come. Noah’s father, Lamech, died when he was 777 years old ([Genesis 5:31](#)), only 80 years before the flood. So, as Noah looked at the growing moral corruption and dangerous violence all around him, and his aging grandfather, he must have been greatly pressed to complete the ark. The Bible says, ***“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he”*** ([Genesis 6:22](#)).

Looking at this biblical background of the catastrophic judgment of God, we have to ask another very important question. Why did God wait so long to bring the flood upon the earth in response to man’s wickedness and rebellion against Him? From the time that God spoke to Enoch at the birth of Methuselah, God waited 969 years before His judgment fell upon the earth. The Apostle Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, gives us the answer. Peter wrote that ***“the longsuffering [patience] of God, waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing”*** ([1 Peter 3:20](#)). What motivated God to be so patient? While answering the objections of the scoffers concerning the apparent delay in the Second Coming of Christ, Peter responded that the Lord is patient toward us, ***“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”*** ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). The reason that God was patient in Noah’s day and today is because in His mercy, His messengers are still warning of the coming judgment and still calling people to repentance to be saved. Jesus came to this earth with the ultimate mission of His loving Father, ***“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”*** ([Luke 19:10](#)).

There is another significant question we need to ask. What brought about the sudden end to God’s patience in the days of Noah? Looking at Peter’s revelation,

the answer to this question also gives the answer to when God's patience will run out in the last days and the global judgment of God will come upon the world, called the Tribulation. [Genesis 6:3](#) gives us the answer to this very critical question, "*And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man.*" The Hebrew word for "*strive*" means, "to judge, contend, or plead." It speaks of God's work through the conscience of man to restrain him from sin and evil. The conscience is a part of man's inner spirit that indicates he has been created in the image of God ([Genesis 1:26](#)). The conscience acts as a spiritual judge living within the soul of man that guides him through the maze of evil in the world and points him toward a holy God. The aim of the conscience is to use God's revelation as the reference point of good and evil ([Romans 2:14-15](#)). It is the moral compass of the soul. The work of the Spirit is to accuse man of his sin and to restrain him from sin and its deadly consequences. [For an expanded teaching on this subject, please read my book, [Living in a World with No Conscience](#).]

On the basis of the Scriptures, we can conclude that God continually restrains evil in a culture. When the

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majority of the population resist God's restraining efforts, at some point the collective conscience of that culture ceases to function and man's wickedness and violence explode out of control. When this happens, it demands that our holy God respond with divine judgment. God's patience runs out and His holy fury

unleashes catastrophic results for those in the path of His judgment.

After the flood, God in His mercy added several layers of restraint in His attempt to warn people of the consequences of sin. According to Genesis 9, He created human government as an external restraining influence ([Genesis 9:5-6](#)). The ultimate restraining influence God invested in human government is capital punishment ([Genesis 9:5-6](#)). God's objective is for human government to use His laws of morality and justice to restrain their culture from evil ([Romans 13:1-7](#)). God calls human government his servants. Human government, God's external restraining influence, and the conscience of man, God's inner restraining influence, are to act in concert together ([Romans 13:5](#)).

According to the chronology of the Bible, 352 years after the flood and the creation of human government, God called another righteous man to Himself. That man was Abraham ([Genesis 12:1-2](#)). Abraham was the 20th generation from the time of creation. God told him that He would make his descendants into a nation. In [Genesis 15:12-21](#), God told Abraham that four generations after him, his descendants would go down to Egypt and live there. They would remain in Egypt until the sins of the occupants of the Promised Land had become so offensive that He would use the nation of Israel to drive them out. Finally, in 1445 B.C., the Exodus took place, just as God has promised Abraham. During their 40 years of wilderness wanderings, at Mount Horeb, God gave Israel the law, His perfect code for moral righteousness, and governmental justice. In essence, this law became the foundation for God's external restraining influence for the duration of man's time on earth.

Finally, God sent His holy Son, Jesus. He guided the people through His teaching to show them how the conscience and the written law of God were to function together. This is summarized in His Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5-7](#)). Jesus taught that He

did not come to cancel the law, but to complement the law with His teaching to show how it connects with man's conscience ([Matthew 5:17](#)). He clearly stated that God's law is eternal. God's moral compass does not change because it is built upon His unchanging and eternal holy character. Jesus' ministry was met with resistance because the religious people were convicted of their sins ([John 15:18-27](#)).

Adding a final layer of restraint to His efforts to save man, God called and instituted the church. In [Acts 2](#), the church was born. As a few decades passed, it became clear to Jesus' appointed apostles that the church is a spiritual body of born-again Jews and Gentiles. Unlike believers in the Old Testament, now the Holy Spirit would live in the body of believers. These believers would become the new temple of God. With the completed written Word of God, the New Testament, the church would become God's ambassadors and the ultimate restraining influence on earth. They would become the salt and light that Jesus referred to in [Matthew 5:13-16](#).

In review, God has three layers of restraining influence in the world to help man resist evil and come to salvation in Him. Layer one is the internal restraining influence in each individual – the conscience. Layer two is the external restraining influence in the world – human government. Layer three is the God-appointed witnesses, filled with His Spirit – the church.

With this biblical understanding, we can now turn our attention to the final question to be addressed in this article. What will happen to trigger God's patience to cease in the last days and bring His wrath against the global inhabitants as He did in the days of Noah? The answer to this question is found in [2 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#).

According to [2 Thessalonians 2](#), mankind will resist all of God's restraining influence as it did in the days of Noah. When this happens, there will be an

immediate explosion of wickedness, evil, immorality, and violence that will produce a condition of *“gross [spiritual] darkness [that] shall cover the earth”* ([Isaiah 60:2](#)). According to this text, the Antichrist, Satan's global ruler, cannot be revealed until God's ultimate restraining influence, the Holy Spirit in the church *“be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked [one] be revealed”* ([2 Thessalonians 2:7-8](#)). God will not permit the Antichrist to come until the time is ripe and men resist God's restraining influence, which is the path that can bring them to repentance and salvation.

When this time comes, God in His holy wrath, will allow man's spiritual darkness to lead him into a time of His divine wrath on earth [the Tribulation], and ultimately their eternal damnation ([2 Thessalonians 2:12](#)). In His holy fury, *“God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe [the] lie”* ([2 Thessalonians 2:11](#)).

This text is clear that the Holy Spirit's unique ministry through His indwelling in the body of Christ as a restraining influence will be taken out through the Rapture, and then the Antichrist will come. So, how close are we to this event?

At this hour, how successful are God's three levels of

God will not permit the Antichrist to come until the time is ripe and men resist God's restraining influence, the path that can bring them to repentance and salvation.

restraining influence working to hold back the eruption of a tide of immoral filth and violent bloodshed around the world? International news indicates we are witnessing a dramatic collapse of the spiritual light around the world. The darkness of evil is rapidly descending upon the planet. Due to the proliferation of moral corruption and the thirst to be

entertained by violence, the collective conscience of America and the world is seared as if with “*a hot iron*” ([1 Timothy 4:2](#)). The majority of the global population has no moral compass. The few that do have a conscience are being overwhelmed, threatened, or silenced by the wicked culture.

The governments of the world are united against God as prophesied in [Psalm 2](#). The United Nations is controlled by those who are atheists, or worship some other idol or god. They have lost any ability to restrain evil and instead have become evil and are the enemies of God and His people. They are prepared to follow the Antichrist. The rule of the Antichrist will be Satan’s ultimate tool to deceive the world and resist God’s restraint of evil.

We have arrived at a point of great deception so that people now claim they do not know what gender they are. They are totally confused and completely deceived.

Finally, as prophesied, in the last days the professing churches will turn away from God’s truth and become like the culture, having a form of godliness ([2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:1-4](#)). Far too many churches in America are spiritually dead. They have become nothing more than social clubs that are self-serving. They are not changing the culture, the culture is changing them! They are not striving to be holy and like God. They are longing to be popular and be like a thriving business – church has become big business in America. They are more concerned with pleasing man, rather than God.

As these three levels of God’s restraining influence continue to deteriorate, at some point God’s patience will end and His judgment will begin. He will call the faithful remnant of believers home, just as He did Enoch. When that happens, the world will almost

instantly reach the levels of corruption and violence as in the days of Noah.

All of this will be accompanied by the great deception of Satan at the end of this age. They will turn away from the truth and believe Satan’s lies.

As I thought about this the other day, it dawned on me that we have arrived at such a point of great deception. In our culture, people now claim they do not know what gender they are. They are totally confused and completely deceived. If a person has arrived at this point of deception and confusion, they are ready for the next step – to accept Satan’s messiah, the Antichrist, and be damned forever!

Please be “*redeeming the time, because the days are evil*” ([Ephesians 5:16](#)).

Be ready for the shout that will take us out!

Arabs Send Stern Message of Warning to Biden and America

World Israel News reports that many Arabs are sending a message of warning to U.S. President Joe Biden. According to Khaled Abu Toameh, and award-winning Arab journalist based in Jerusalem, “U.S. policies and actions are undermining your credibility among your allies and paving the way for the return of Islamic terrorist groups” ([World Israel News, July 20, 2021](#)).

President Biden has announced that the war on terror is over and that U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan beginning at the end of this month. Toameh says that the Arabs in the region are “warning the U.S. that it will pay a heavy price for allowing Afghanistan to fall into the hands of terrorist groups. ... The American withdrawal from the region will mark a victory of a political Islamic organization, and the victor always attracts attention and becomes the focus of public attention” ([World Israel News, July 20, 2021](#)).

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