

I. What Must Come Before Christ's Return**A. The Standard: God's Word is our sole authority**

- 1) The Apostle binds them with an oath (v 1; 2 Tim 4:1)
- 2) A warning to the Church (v 2; Heb 12:28)
 - a) Against false sources (1 Kgs 13:15-18, 2 Tim 2:16-18):
 - b) Against curiosity, in general (Acts 1:7)
 - c) And so, *Let no one deceive you by any means* (v 3a)!

B. The Foundational Understanding of History: We are in the last days, but the Last Day has not come (Heb 1:1-2a)**C. The Apostasy and Man of Sin must be revealed**

- 1) *The falling away comes first*
 - a) As distinct from a recurring pattern in the Visible Church (Lk 8:13)
 - b) But a particular, historical falling away, which is the false Church of Rome (1 Tim 4:1; Rev 13:11)
 - c) So that there is both the Antichrist and his Antichristian Church (Jude 6)
- 2) *And the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition*
 - a) First (though this title is not given here), Antichrist
 - i. As distinct from many antichrists, which were already in operation (1 Jn 3:18; v 7)
 - ii. As distinct from the spirit of antichrist (1 Jn 4:3)
 - iii. But rather, it is a distinct, historical office; that is the head of the antichristian (apostate) church. WCF 25.6, 'There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God.'
 - b) *Man of Sin*, or the *Man of Lawlessness* (1 Jn 3:4).
 - c) *Son of Perdition* [meaning, destruction]
 - i. Analogy to Judas (Jn 17:12)
 - ii. Meaning — Thomas Manton (32-33):
 - 'Judas was not a stranger but a pretended friend

and apostle'

- Judas 'sold Christ for a small matter'
- 'Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss, under a pretense of honouring him
- 'Judas was a guide to them that came to take Christ'
- 'The covetousness of Judas is set forth'.

D. The Apostate Church and Man of Sin must be destroyed

- 1) The Destruction of Babylon and the Beast
- 2) The Widespread Calling of Jews to Christ (Rom 11:25-26a)
- 3) The Triumph of the Gospel through Every Nation (Isa 2:2-5)
- 4) The Final Assault upon the Church (Rev 20:7-9)
- 5) The Last Day (1 Cor 15:24-25)

II. The Return of Christ**A. The Return of Christ (1 Thes 4:16)****B. The Resurrection of the Body (1 Thes 4:16-17)****C. The Judgement of All Men by Christ (Acts 17:31)****D. The Renewal of the Heavens and the Earth (Rev 21:1)****III. Uses from the Text****A. We are to look to Christ's return with:**

- 1) Faith (2 Pt 1:4)
- 2) Hope (Song 8:14)
- 3) Love (Gen 29:20)

B. In view of Christ's return and what must come before, we are exhorted:

- 1) To fervent prayer (Larger Catechism 191)
- 2) To trust in the Lord's providence.
- 3) To confidence in the Gospel (Rev 11:3, 5)
- 4) To confidence over our enemies because of Christ's mediatorial kingship (Psa 2:4-6)
- 5) To compassion for the lost (Prov 8:1-3)
- 6) To comfort in sufferings (2 Thes 2:16-17)
- 7) To understanding of the times (1 Chr 12:32)
- 8) To patience.
- 9) To zeal for holiness (2 Pt 3:14)
- 10) To perseverance (2 Thes 2:15)