

Teachers reportedly ask pupils about their parents' views, with the result that parents feel obliged to disguise their thoughts in front of their children. The penalty for refusing to inform is severe.¹ (50)

17. Principle: Cultures that have no innate integrity inevitably end up with leadership which has no integrity.
18. There are three classifications of integrity:
 - (1) For unbelievers that subscribe to the laws of divine establishment, there is the development of establishment morality.
 - (2) For believers that subscribe to the laws of divine establishment there is the development of establishment integrity.
 - (3) For believers that subscribe to the laws of divine establishment and Bible doctrine, there is the development of Christian integrity.
19. Second Thessalonians, chapter 2, documents that the removal of the Royal Family, and with it the various restraining ministries of the Holy Spirit, means those that are left behind are unbelievers at various stages of arrogance and hatred.
20. It is in this environment that the Beast-Dictator quickly rises to prominence. The extent of his self-exaltation is seen in the prepositional phrase, "... exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship"
21. The Beast-Dictator organizes his global clique by using the time-tested rhetorical veil of religion. To profess superiority over God and get away with it means the minds of the people must be neutralized.
22. The last to go are the Jews who agreed to go into a peace treaty with Rome during the first half of the Tribulation. In fact, this treaty marks the beginning of the Daniel's prophetic seventieth heptad.

¹ Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf* (New York: Times Books, 1990), 47–50.

23. The next phrase of verse 4 indicates the Antichrist's achievement of coopting the Jews into an agreement that projects him as the Messiah: "so that he takes his seat in the temple of God."
24. The pronoun "he" does not singularly find its antecedent in the Beast-Dictator, but a statue of that person that the Jews agreed to set up in the temple.
25. This verse in 2 Thessalonians 2 is the subject of other passages on the subject. For example:

Matthew 24:15 - So when you shall see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ...

26. Daniel's prophecy regarding this is found in:

Daniel 9:27 - And he [**the Beast-Dictator**] shall enter into a treaty with the many [**Jewish reversionists in the Tribulation**] for one heptad. In the middle of the heptad, he shall cause the sacrifice and food offerings to stop [**cancelation of Jewish sacerdotal rituals**]; and under the protection of the abominations [**ecumenical religion**] will come one [**Beast-Dictator**] who causes desolation [**of the Jewish temple**] until the termination [**of the Seventieth Heptad**], one that is decreed [**see context**] will be poured out on the desolator [**the Beast-Dictator along with the False Prophet are sentenced to the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20)²**].
(EXT)

27. It is important to note that the events being discussed take place at the midpoint of the Tribulation or of the seventieth heptad.
28. The placing of the idol of the Antichrist occurs at the point when 486½ years have passed in Daniel's 490-year prophecy that leads up to the Second Advent of Christ.

² Details of the ascendancy and regency of the Beast-Dictator and False Prophet are prophesied in Revelation 13.

29. This is when the Beast-Dictator plays his religion card. He does not personally enter into the Jewish temple and take a seat. An image of himself is placed in the Holy of Holies.
30. This is not only a consolidation of several religions into one ecumenical body, but an official declaration of war against God and Jesus Christ as the Lord of the Armies.
31. As the verse ends, the Antichrist is “displaying himself as being God.” The word “displaying” is the present active participle of the verb **ἀποδείκνυμι** (*apodeiknumi*): “to designate, demonstrate, exhibit.”
32. The Beast-Dictator’s breaking of the treaty with Israel moves the heptad into its second half, known as the Great Tribulation or “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”
33. This last phrase is a quote from Jeremiah that describes the midpoint of the Tribulation:

Jeremiah 30:7 - “Alas!” for that day is great [the last half of the Tribulation or Great Tribulation], there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s [Israel’s] distress [“trouble” (KJV)], but he [Israel] will be saved [יִשָּׁא (yasha’): delivered from certain death] from it [genocide]. (NASB)
34. The culprit is the Beast-Dictator who, by means of an idolatrous image of himself in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish temple, proclaims himself as “god.”
35. This effort by the Antichrist results in a vast response from the benighted of Western Europe and beyond as he is proclaimed to be God.
36. The present tense of *apodeiknumi* is pictorial which indicates that the general acceptance of the statue of the Beast-Dictator means there is a popular belief that he *is* god.
37. The active voice identifies the one making this proclamation is the Beast-Dictator.

38. In the old Roman Empire, emperors declared themselves to be “god” and sculptures were made of them. One even required subjects to bow to his statue:

Julius Caesar allowed himself to be worshiped as a god, but his successor Augustus only allowed emperor worship outside of the city of Rome. Augustus is known in some inscriptions as CAESAR DIVI FILIUS, Son of God, that is, Son of eternal Caesar. Oaths were taken on the divine spirit of the emperor. His image was publicly adored. Worship of the image was a regular military duty. Caligula was the first emperor to demand to be worshiped, he demanded that citizens everywhere bow to his statue. Nero also claimed to be divine, although in neither case was there a requirement to worship the emperor. As Augustus had been Zeus incarnate, so Nero was Apollo incarnate. Even Seneca called him as the long-awaited savior of the world.³

39. This same trend will exist in the Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation in the person of the Beast-Dictator. The authority given to him is documented prophetically in Revelation 13:

Revelation 13:4 - They worshipped the dragon [Lucifer] because he gave absolute power to the Beast-Dictator. They also worshipped the Beast-Dictator and they said, “Who is like the Beast-Dictator? Who is able to fight against him?”

v. 5 - There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogantly exaggerated words and blasphemies. Also, there was given to him by Lucifer ruling power and authority to function for forty-two months [the last 3½ years of the heptad].

v. 6 - And the Beast-Dictator opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name, His heavenly tabernacle, and those who tabernacle in heaven. (EXT)

40. The combination of dictatorial power granted to the Beast-Dictator and public worship of his person and image solidifies ecumenical religion in the Great Tribulation.

³ “The Roman Cult of Emperor Worship.” Jewish Christian Literature, April 2, 2012. <http://readingacts.com/2012/04/02/the-roman-cult-of-emperor-worship-2/>, accessed November 13, 2015.

PRINCIPLES:

1. When the Rapture occurs, the Church is removed in a two-pronged evacuation of earth into the third heaven. Also removed along with living believers are their imputed righteousness and its grace pipeline. (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51–54)
2. The Rapture is also described by Paul as the Exit Resurrection in:

Philippians 3:9 - (I) may be found in Him [**positional sanctification**], not having righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith [**the grace pipeline**],

v. 10 - that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His physical sufferings, being conformed to His death;

v. 11 - in order that I may attain [**become a winner**] to the resurrection [**ἐξανάστασις (exanástasis): exit resurrection**] from the dead ones.
3. Some commentators subscribe to a post-tribulational Rapture and assert that God's grace is sufficient for believers regardless of historical circumstances.
4. Their assertion is true, but its premise of a post-tribulational Rapture is false. As long as Church-Age believers remain alive on this earth, Lucifer's ability to consolidate his power is restrained.
5. This doctrine will be developed in 2 Thessalonians 4:6–7 in our study.
6. Consequently, the belief in the post-tribulational Rapture ignores the absence of the Holy Spirit's restraining ministry during the Tribulation.
7. This absence explains the rapidity of the Beast-Dictator's consolidation of power and his success in proclaiming himself to be "god."

8. The extraction of all believers at the Rapture causes the removal of the currently existing pivot and the elimination of its client nation.
9. However, many religious organizations will continue to function and possess funds, real estate, and buildings.
10. Filling the vacuum of leadership created by the Rapture will be those who promote the Beast-Dictator's ecumenical movement.
11. Being both apostate and blasphemous, these new "Christian" leaders will promote the amalgamation of all religions into one.
12. The final religious group to fall into line will be the Jews. When the "abomination of desolation" is placed in the temple's Holy of Holies, the treaty the Antichrist made with the Jews is canceled.
13. At the halfway mark of the Tribulation, the Beast-Dictator's policy toward Israel is exposed as fraudulent; his publicly perceived pro-Semitic policy toward Israel becomes anti-Semitic.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 - The Lucifer-indwelt Beast-Dictator opposes God and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, with the result that he symbolically takes his seat in the Holy of Holies of the temple of God in the form of a self-commissioned statue, asserting that he himself is God. (EXT)