"THE DECEIVER AND THE DECEIVED"

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

7-15-2026

INTRODUCTION:

***Like those who will live in the future Tribulation,**
WE MUST BEWARE OF SATANIC DECEPTION!

Four characteristics about religious deception:

I. The <u>SOURCE</u> of the Deception (v. 9a)
("After the working of Satan")

II. The <u>SUBSTANCE</u> of the Deception (v. 9b)
("Power, signs, and lying wonders")

III. The <u>REASON</u> for the Deception (v. 10-11)
(Refusal to receive the Truth)

IV. The <u>RESULT</u> of the Deception (v. 12)
(Eternal damnation)

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INTRODUCTION:

In the context, Paul is comforting the Thessalonians with the fact that they are not entering the Day of the Lord, as some false teachers had deluded them into believing (v. 1-2).

The reason he gives, is that two conditions must be met before that Day can come.

The two conditions are: 1) the Apostasy must occur first
And 2) the Man of Sin must be revealed first (v. 3)

To prove to them that this man of sin (Antichrist) has not been revealed, Paul gives a lengthy description of Antichrist's activities and character. Such a description gives us insight into the Antichrist and his deception to come.

The Bible explicitly teaches that *"Antichrist shall come"* (I Jn. 2:18).

This man of wickedness is also called *"The Beast"* and is spoken about in Rev. 11:7; 13:4-8; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 10; 17:3, 11, 16-17; 19:20).

Satan is a master counterfeit. He is well known for his ability to <u>imitate</u> (EX: the counterfeit miracles in Egypt - Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7; Satan's counterfeit messengers - II Cor. 11:13-15).

In a sinful world where there exists the true, there also exists the false; where there is the honest truth, there also exists the lie; where there is the genuine, there also exists the imitation, where there is the real, there also exists the counterfeit.

Satan is a deceiver (Rev. 12:9; 20:3) and a liar (Jn. 8:44).

SEE: Christ's warning against the counterfeit Messiahs to come (Mt. 24:21-27).

***Like those who will live in the future Tribulation,**
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Four characteristics about religious deception:

I. The SOURCE of the Deception (v. 9a)

("After the working of Satan")

"Even him whose" - Refers to the *"wicked"* one (v. 8), the *"man of sin"* (v. 3) = i.e. the Antichrist

"Coming" - (*parousia)* lit. presence, appearing.

The same word is used of Christ's *"coming"* (v. 8).

This word proves that the *"Wicked One"* is not some invisible force or spirit, but that he is one who will be visible. He will be a person who will be *"revealed"* (v. 3, 6, 8).

"After the working of Satan" - The Antichrist is not Satan as some have suggested, because he will be empowered by Satan.

"After" - in accordance with

The word ***"working"*** (*energia)* means to have supernatural energy. Antichrist will be energized by Satan; Satan will not only give him his authority (power to rule - Rev. 13:4), but will also give him power to come back to life (Rev. 13:3) and ascend out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7); power to speak great things and blasphemies (Rev. 13:5); power to rule the world for 42 months (Rev. 13:5); and power to conquer the world (13:7).

II. The SUBSTANCE of the Deception (v. 9b)
("Power, signs, and lying wonders")

"All" - has two ideas:

1) "Every," "every kind or variety of"
(Antichrist will perform all kinds of false miracles)
2) "It may signify the highest degree or the maximum of what is referred to" (Vine, p. 46)

"Power" - ability; explosive power and strength

"Signs" -a supernatural miracle designed to validate, authenticate or prove the reality of the one who performs it. Usually, a statement is made and then a miraculous act is done to validate the statement. Antichrist will claim to be "God" (v. 4) and will "prove" it by signs (v. 9).

"Wonders" - something strange (out of the ordinary) which causes the beholder to marvel or be amazed.
It is an amazing feat which appeals to the senses (you can see it, hear it, experience it, etc.).

- The word *"power"* shows the energy behind the miracles (they will be undeniable)
- The word *"signs"* shows the significance behind the miracles (they will "prove")
- The word *"wonders"* shows the astonishment produced by the miracles (they will amaze)

Antichrist's spectators will be held spellbound; they will watch with their jaws hanging open in amazement.

Satan will play with men's minds (by sending *"signs"*) and their emotions (by causing *"wonders")*.

"Lying" - false, fake, pseudo
The Greek word *"lying"* perhaps modifies not only the word *"wonders,"* but also the words *"power"* and "*signs."*

"The purpose of God's miracles was to lead people to the truth; the purpose of Antichrist's miracles will be to lead people to believe his lies. Paul called them *"lying wonders"* (v. 9), not because the miracles are not real, but because they persuade people to believe Satan's lies" (Wiersbe, p. 145).

The Antichrist will not be the one who will perform such signs and wonders, but he will be the ultimate one. (Mt. 24:24 - *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."*; cp. Mark 13:22).

III. The REASON for the Deception (v. 10-11)
(Refusal to receive the Truth)

V. 10

"Deceivableness of unrighteousness" -

Two possible ideas:

1) Deception caused by unrighteousness (Antichrist's unrighteous lies and false wonders will deceive)

2) Deception which leads to unrighteousness (what one believes will always manifest itself by how one behaves. Because the world will believe a lie, they will oppose the truth and those who stand on the truth).

The deception will not be believed by everyone, but it will be believed by those who are going to perish.

The word *"perish"* is a participle in the middle voice and refers to the ones who are causing themselves to perish; they are destroying themselves; they are fitting themselves to eternal ruin. No one can blame God when they spend eternity in the Lake of fire. They chose to perish when they chose to reject the truth and believe the lie.

"His own iniquities shall take the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin" (Prov. 5:22).

"Paul does not imply that those perishing are the unfortunate victims of "predestination unto damnation." The cause for their perishing lies not in God but in themselves" (Hiebert, p. 317).

"Because" - gives the reason why they were deceived and would inevitably perish

"They received not" - they did not welcome the truth into their life; they did not grasp on to it; they did not accept it.

NOTE: God's truth evidently will be heard by those who will not receive it. They will hear it from the lips of the believing Church (Rev. 12:11) and the Two Witnesses. (Rev. 11:6, 7).

"And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mt. 24:14).

"The love of the truth" - what they will reject is <u>the truth</u> and its message of love (Jn. 3:16; Ro. 5:8).

God's truth is a message inspired by His love for men's souls, whereas Satan's lie will be a message inspired by hate for men's souls.

God, as it were, has stretched out His arms to a lost world and said, "I Love you; I gave My Son for you; I long to save you." Yet the world (outside of a small remnant) ignores and refuses to receive His invitation.

Not merely did they refuse *"the truth"* but they refused the loving saving truth of the gospel (cp. Hiebert, p. 318).

"That they might be saved" - salvation; deliverance from Satan's lies; rescue from the doom of eternal fire -- is a matter of <u>receiving the Truth</u> of God's Word. Salvation is a matter of embracing God's gospel message. Faith is what God requires for salvation.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (jn. 8:32).

Some teach that those who reject Christ in this dispensation (before the Tribulation) cannot be saved after the Tribulation begins.

Does this passage teach this? Not exactly. The timing of the rejection is not stated. It is true, at least, that those who have heard the gospel and yet reject Christ at any time prior to or up until the time of the revealing of the Man of sin, and who take his mark, will have no chance of salvation (Rev. 14:9-13).

V. 11

"For this cause" - because they refused to receive the love of the truth, God is sending to them strong delusion.

NOTE: It is a serious thing to turn your back on God's truth (Rom. 1:28 - *"Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.")*

God will sovereignly allow those who reject His truth to believe the delusion of Antichrist.

NOTE: God is not responsible for the delusion (He does not tempt any man - Ja. 1:13). He is responsible for keeping men's eyes from seeing it, once they have decided to not see it.

"Strong delusion" - a powerful working of Satan designed to lead someone astray. An operation that causes one to err in judgment and to make a wrong decision.

The lost Antichrist-worshipping world will have no spiritual discernment whatsoever.

"A lie" - lit. <u>the</u> lie; the particular false lie; namely - that Antichrist is God (v. 4), and that his lying power, signs, and wonders (v. 9) prove that he is.

"The lie" according to Rom. 1:25 is to worship and serve the creature (man and other created things) rather than the Creator.

IV. The <u>RESULT</u> of the Deception (v. 12)

(Eternal damnation)

***"That"* =** with the <u>result</u> that

The end result of those who will believe Antichrist's lie is damnation (condemnation, judgment which proves that they are worthy of the sentence of eternal torment - SEE: Rev. 14:9-11).

The deluded are damned for two reasons:

1) They did not put their truth (dependance) int he truth of God's Word. They *"believed not the truth."*

2) They rejected such truth because they delighted in sin. They *"had pleasure in unrighteousness."* John 3:19 - *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

Never forget that the "pleasures of sin" only last for a short "season" (Heb. 11:25).

That which they took pleasure in (v. 12) deceived them (v. 10).

Whatever you look for pleasure in, outside of God (Ps. 16:11), will always end up hurting you!

"What will take place in those deceived by Antichrist, is seen on a smaller scale every day" (Findlay, cited by Hiebert, p. 318).

Many today refuse to bow to the truth of the Gospel, and thereby subject themselves to lies and ultimate damnation.

Everyone who ends up in hell will be there because they were deceived while on earth.

--deceived regarding self (Rom. 3; Mt. 13:22 - self-righteous and self-sufficient)

--deceived regarding sin (Heb. 3:13 - *"But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin)*

--deceived regarding salvation(II Cor. 11:3 - *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so that your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ")*

CONCLUSION:

Three truths every Christian must remember to avoid being deceived:

1. **Seeing is not believing**
   (a mirage looks like water but it is not)

2. **Satan has power to perform the miraculous** (he can do the supernatural) (Lk. 4:5; Mt. 24:24; Mk. 5:4; II Th. 2:9)

3. **Our only authority is the Bible**

   Our authority is not experiential in nature (just because you can see it, feel it, speak it [ex. tongues] etc. does not mean it is from God).

   a. God's true prophets (apostles) prophesied with 100% accuracy (anything less demanded stoning - Deut. 18:20-22)

   b. Miracles (even undeniable ones) do not authenticate someone if their message is contrary to the Word of God - Deut. 13:1-3.

      Sometimes a convincing miracle (that is not from God) is a test of your l

for God and your loyalty to His Word.

Today, we need to have spiritual discernment.

**"Believe not every spirit." (I Jn. 4:1-3)*

The way to discern a spirit is to listen to what they say. Put them to a doctrinal test.

*The best way to know a lie, is to know the truth! (Jn. 8:31, 32; cp. I Jn. 4:4-6).

You must know your Bible!