

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

Rise of Antichrist:
Do NOT be Unbelieving

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Introduction

Scripture states that there is a coming man of sin who will lead the world astray into a satanic false religion that will dominate the world. The Antichrist will initially look good, but then will reveal his true evil nature as he will be possessed by Satan himself.

In this last part of the chapter, Paul gives warnings and instructions in how to prepare for period of calamity.

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2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

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Specifically, unbelievers will be deceived by Antichrist and perish because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. The phrase the love of the truth appears only here in the New Testament and adds a compelling thought to Paul's argument. The unregenerate are eternally lost, not because they did not hear or understand the truth, but because they did not love it. The truth includes both "the word of truth, the gospel" (Col. 1:5), and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate (John 14:6; cf. 1:17; Eph. 4:21). Unbelievers do not welcome either Jesus or the gospel He proclaimed. Their aversion to the truth is not intellectual, but moral, and their self-imposed blindness leaves the unredeemed under a damning level of satanic deception. It is not surprising, then, that Antichrist will deceive the entire lost world.

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The Bible clearly teaches that those who go to hell do so because they reject the truth. Speaking of Jerusalem's rejection of the truth, Jesus lamented, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing" (Matt. 23:37). John 3:19–20 says, "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

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Because the unredeemed did not receive the love of the truth they "do not know God and ... do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess 1:8). They willfully choose to love their sin, believe Satan's lies, and hate the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 10:37 Jesus taught that salvation involves loving Him above all else: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

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The terrifying reality is that God will seal the fate of those who hate the gospel by sending **them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.**

Antichrist will deceive people with satanically empowered false miracles, signs, and wonders, but his deception only will succeed because it fits into God's sovereign purpose. He will sentence unbelievers to accept evil as if it were good and lies as if they were the truth. Those who continually choose falsehood will be caught by it. In the words of **Proverbs 5:22**, "His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin."

They will be turned over by God to the consequences of their choice to reject the gospel.

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The story of Pharaoh is a grim reminder that God will judicially harden the hearts of those who persist in hardening their hearts against the truth. Because Pharaoh hardened his heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34; 1 Sam. 6:6), God hardened Pharaoh's heart, fixing him in a path from which he could never return (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8).

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In Isaiah 6:9–10, a passage quoted repeatedly in the New Testament (Matt. 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26–27; Rom. 11:8), God said to Isaiah, **“Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.’ Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.”** God told Isaiah that He would sovereignly prevent hard-hearted rejecters of the truth from responding to his preaching. Similarly, Jesus spoke in parables not only to reveal spiritual truth to believers but also to conceal it in judgment on unbelievers (Matt. 13:11–13; Luke 8:10). There comes a day that those who persistently reject the truth will be unable to believe it; God will harden their hearts and fix them in the path they have chosen.

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Because of Ahab’s rebellion and unfaithfulness, God allowed Satan to deceive him through false prophets (1 Kings 22:19–23). In the future, God will again use Satan as an instrument of His judgment, **that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** Satan will, through Antichrist and the false prophet, delude the world into believing the lie that Antichrist is God. Unbelievers will be confirmed in that belief because they will choose not to love the truth, but rather to take **pleasure in unrighteousness.**

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There are those who believe that these verses teach that if a person has heard the gospel before the tribulation, then they will be unable to be saved. In my opinion this is fear tactics to manipulate a person into salvation. However, this could lead to a false profession as they are not really grieved by their sin, nor truly understand its consequences. It would not be a profession based on love for Jesus. This passage is teaching that in the tribulation as with people today, there comes a point where they have hardened their hearts, that God also hardens them and turns them over to their sin or in this case the man of sin. There is a theological explanation in the back you can read at your leisure.

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So What ...

I have found that many people today are playing games with God. They do not want to go to hell, but they fear man and do not what to live openly for Christ. It is time to stop playing games!!!

Let me encourage you. Everyone of us is going to impact the world! The question is how will you impact it? Will your life draw people to Jesus and righteousness or draw them to something else.

Let's commit ourselves to living and sharing the "Good News" of Jesus Christ. You never know, you just might lead someone to Christ!

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