

Who will be deceived?

2 Thessalonians 2:9–17

I. INTRO

A. The path of deception and the path of truth

II. *[9] The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, [10] and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the **truth** and so be saved. [11] Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, [12] in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the **truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

A. Will there be a great revival or a great deception at the end?

1. Biblically we see...

- a) There will be a remnant from every tribe and tongue (Rev 7)
- b) There will be a mass revival among the Jews (Rom 11)

2. Will people get saved until the end? Yes, of course, but we shouldn't be shocked when (proportionately) there greater deception than salvation

- a) *Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

B. Who will be deceived?

1. Those who are perishing

- a) Those already down the path of destruction, those who have been deceived by the Deceiver, will continue in and see an increased magnitude of deception
- b) Those who are not perishing, e.g. those who are eternally living, will not be deceived. Do not fret about it.

2. Why are they perishing? They refused to love the truth

- a) Because they refused to love the truth they cannot be saved
- b) Because they cannot be saved, they are perishing
- c) Because they are perishing, they will be deceived

3. So the big question is "what is the truth that they rejected?" That seems to be very important.

- a) Well, biblically, what is the truth that saves? The gospel: The Jesus died so our sins could be forgiven, that he was raised so we could live forever, that he sent us his Holy Spirit so that we could follow him as king, and that he is coming again
- b) Look at how truth is used in this passage (vv10, 12, 13)
- c) This is consistent w/ the NT and how it uses the word truth

(1) He "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4 NIV).

(2) Only Christ is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6 NIV).

(3) How it is used in 1,2,3 John; 1,2 Peter; James; Hebrews; Every one of Paul’s epistles; and the Gospels

(4) *Colossians 1:5 - because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, [which is] the gospel*

d) So, b/c they won’t believe in the truth of the gospel they are perishing and, therefore deceived

C. But who deceives them?

1. The scripture here is very clear. God sends them a strong delusion so that the deception continues.
2. In Exodus God promised to harden Pharaoh's heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart, God hardened - the hardening was interwoven.
 - a) Man will be deceived unless God intervenes. We are spiritually dead, not spiritually sick
 - b) God will never reject genuine repentance. This is in large part b/c it is a gift from God in the first place.
3. *“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.” All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. Those who knock it is opened.” — C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce*

D. Why does God deceive those who are perishing?

1. This is, in essence, part of God’s judgment - giving us what we deserve and desire, even if it is to our detriment
2. God gives unbelievers over to their own folly and b/c of that they embrace the Antichrist (e.g. they believe what is false)
3. This perpetuates their own rebellion and their own deception. They go from bad to worse. Their wickedness and their casting off of God expands
4. Fittingly, they stand condemned

E. But not everyone will be condemned... there is a great and glorious hope

III. *[13] But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. [14] To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

A. Who won’t be deceived?

1. On the contrary, there are the people of God, the beloved brothers.
2. Paul thanks God for them b/c they are the alternative to deception
3. They are the firstfruits of salvation, those sanctified by the Spirit, those who believe in the truth (counter to those who hate the truth!)
4. They WON’T be deceived. They CAN’T be.

a) For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. (Matt 24:24)

B. Why won't they be deceived?

1. Because God chose them to be saved rather than deceived. What do I mean that God chose them?
2. I am not saying that God brings people kicking and screaming into the kingdom or he has ever excluded someone who wanted to be there.
3. I am saying that man is spiritually dead, not sick, dead, and in this natural man does not want Christ.
 - a) Man will only desire Christ, crave truth over deception, if God plants a desire for Christ in his heart.
 - b) Once that imperishable seed is planted within the body of death, the desires of man change and are altered. They no longer kick and scream against Christ. Instead they are drawn to him.
 - (1) They come because they want to come.
 - (2) They now desire Jesus.
 - (3) They rush to the Saviour.
 - c) Our spiritual rebirth quickens us to life in such a way that Jesus becomes irresistible to those that have been made alive.
4. Any spiritual interest in Christ you have is a gift from God. Cherish it.

C. How is this salvation made effective?

1. We are saved by belief in the truth (the Gospel)
2. And from that place of belief, the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification (setting aside and changing over time) works out the gospel in our lives
3. This process of redemption culminates in restoration, and this is God's great calling for us.
 - a) We heard his Word and it beckoned us. The Spirit of God woos us and chases us to glory. (just like we sang)
4. In other words, this is a work of God so that no man can boast

D. Why would God do this?

1. Why would God save a worm like me and like you?
2. So that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ
3. Look at the goodness of God! How great a savior we have that we might be called sons of God, and so we are! What great love he has for us that he would invite us to share in the glory of his son, the visible image of the invisible God, the exact imprint of his nature, the radiance of his glory

IV. [15] So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.[16] Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, [17] comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. [1] Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, [2] and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. [3] But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and

guard you against the evil one. [4] And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. [5] May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

A. In light of these realities, what do you do?

1. Stand firm and hold fast

- a) To what? The oral tradition of the apostles and the teachings of Jesus - what you know as the Bible!
- b) Cling to it, don't be tripped by forked tongue prophets
- c) Remember what is TRUTH and hold to it like a sure and steady anchor for your soul

2. Trust the Triune God

- a) What has God done?
 - (1) He has loved us...
 - (2) Gave us eternal comfort...
 - (3) Gave us a good hope through grace
- b) What will he do?
 - (1) He will continue to comfort us by his Spirit
 - (2) He will establish us (perseverance) in word and work

3. Pray for gospel progress despite opposition!

- a) For the word of the Lord to pierce through the darkness
 - (1) b/c it deserves to be heard and received
 - (2) b/c the night is evil and there are many adversaries
 - (a) But trust him through this!

TABLE TALK:

1. What stuck with you the most from today's message?
2. How does this give you a deeper appreciation for the gospel and your own salvation?
3. How should this spur you on to labor in prayer for other people and boldly share the gospel?