



Seized Before the Day

"No Salvation for You!"

The focus in these verses is the danger of rejecting Jesus Christ as your Savior in this day of grace. Once the church is raptured, the world will be plunged into the awful horrors of the seven-year Great Tribulation. Christians will be persecuted - hunted down and martyred.

Evangelists are fond of saying, "If you can't live for Jesus now, how will you die for Him then?"

Paul began by summarizing the Tribulation in verse eight:

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The Tribulation begins when the "lawless one will be revealed." It ends with the Second Coming of Jesus to earth.

The "lawless one" is one of the many names for the person we commonly call the antichrist.

The name "antichrist" is only found in 1John 2:18, 2:22, 4:3, and 2John 7. The Apostle John was the only Bible writer to use the name antichrist. Studying these verses, we learn that many antichrists (false teachers) will appear between the time of Christ's first and Second Coming, but there will be one great antichrist who will rise to power during the end times, or "last hour," as 1John phrases it. He will deny that Jesus is the Christ. He will deny both God the Father and God the Son. He will be a liar and a deceiver.

The Greek prefix *anti* has two meanings: *against*, and *instead of*. Satan not only opposes Christ, but he wants to be worshiped and obeyed instead of Christ.

We saw in the previous verses he could not be revealed until the Holy Spirit who restrains him was removed in the rapture of the church.

Paul calls him the "lawless one" to emphasize his total and complete rebellion to God. He won't just be another antichrist; he will be **the** antichrist.

When Jesus returns He easily overcomes the antichrist and his forces.

- The "breath of His mouth" are the words Jesus speaks. There will be no long, drawn-out combat.
- The "brightness of His coming" is Jesus revealed in His glory and majesty.

In-between the revealing of the antichrist and the revelation of Jesus Christ, men on the earth will hear the Gospel and be saved.

During the first half of the Tribulation, God will evangelize the world by the means of the 144,000 Jews and thus fulfill the prophecy found in Matthew 24:14.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

In addition to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, there will be normal evangelism taking place like we see today.

Further, the Two Witnesses will provide an evangelistic witness to Israel.

Finally, at the mid-point of the tribulation Revelation 14 tells us that God Himself will use angels to preach the gospel and warn "earth dwellers" not to take the mark of the beast.

The three angelic announcements are as follows:

1. First, an angel will preach " an eternal gospel . . . to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6).
2. Second, the next angel will make the following pronouncement: " Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality" (Revelation 14:8).
3. Finally, the last angelic proclamation will specifically warn every person on earth not to take the mark of the beast, since doing so will result in their eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. " If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand . . . he will

be tormented with fire and brimstone . . . forever and ever" (Revelation 14:9-11).

No worries, then; you can get saved after the rapture - once you see that everything your Christian friends told you was true.

Not so fast. The next few verses ought to send a shiver up your spine – especially if you are not yet a Christian.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

"Working" indicates a supernatural empowering, in this case by Satan. He will be empowered to affect "power, signs, and lying wonders."

- "Power" is the source, in this case, Satan.
- "Signs" point to a significance behind what he does, and that is to lead astray.
- "Wonders" indicates the astonishment produced in the beholders. They will be spellbound.

"Lying" doesn't mean they will be false or mere tricks. They will be real miracles that are intended to deceive you. J.B. Phillips translates it, "he will come with evil's undiluted power to deceive."

2 Thessalonians 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception...

He will employ every conceivable form of deception. He will have an arsenal of wonders to perform to keep folks astonished.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

"Those who perish" is in a verb tense meaning they have succumbed to the deception and are on the path leading to ruin.

They "received not" looks back to a definite decision. They refused to open their hearts to "the love of the truth." God was drawing them by His grace through the Gospel but they willfully rejected it and refused to cooperate.

They are personally responsible for their fate having deliberately rejected the offer of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

"That they might be saved" reminds us that it is not God's will that any should perish but that all would come to eternal life.

There is no predestination to damnation - not in these verses; not in any verses.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

Wow! It almost sounds like God has condemned these people or predestined them for Hell. No, no; He hasn't. He acts to save them. In the Tribulation there will be ample opportunities to receive Jesus Christ. Every creature on the earth will hear the Gospel.

What God does is give them over to the consequences of their willful rejection of the truth. If they won't receive the truth and be saved, then they will believe "the lie" and be "condemned."

"God will send them strong delusion" refers to an inward working of delusion upon their hearts. God does not lie; He tells them the truth by confronting them with the Gospel. But, having refused the Gospel and rejected Jesus Christ, there is an inward working of the sin they've chosen that leads them farther and farther away from the truth.

God gives them over to their personal choice, to bear the consequences of their decision. They will thus "believe the lie" of antiChrist that man can be his own god and be like god. Proverbs 5:22 says something similar:

Proverbs 5:22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin.

An important question for us is **when** does this rejection take place and God send the strong delusion. If you hear the Gospel, and reject it, before the rapture, will you be able to repent and believe?

William MacDonald says no:

From this passage it seems that those who hear the gospel in this Age of Grace but who do not trust Christ will not have another opportunity to be saved after the Rapture. If men do not believe the Lord Jesus now, they will believe the Antichrist then. It says here that they all will be judged because of their unbelief and their love of evil.... it seems that those who will be saved are those who

never heard the Gospel clearly presented during this present age and who never deliberately refused the Savior.

Warren Wiersbe looks at it differently:

Does this mean that those who have heard the Gospel before the Rapture of the church cannot be saved after the Rapture? Not necessarily. If that were true, then our witness to the lost is condemning them, should Christ return. However, it does mean that no lost sinner can afford to treat God's truth carelessly or reject God's Son repeatedly. The human heart becomes harder each time the sinner rejects God's truth; and this makes it easier to believe Satan's lies.

It's a toss-up. But if there is even a hint that you will not respond to the Gospel **then** if you are rejecting it **now**, then you should be terrified. The fact we cannot give a definitive answer makes it all the more urgent nonbelievers repent and believe, responding to the grace of God freeing their wills to draw them to Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

These people willfully rejected the "truth" and instead were "well pleased with unrighteousness." It's an either/or situation. Either you receive Jesus or in your rejection you are consumed by your sin so much so that you actually take pleasure in things that are totally "unrighteous."

One thing is certain: When Jesus returns, it will be too late to repent.

Do you believe the Lord? Then you have no part in any part of the Tribulation. You'll be raptured before antiChrist can be revealed.

Not a believer? Then – if the rapture occurred today – you would be left behind to remain for the Tribulation.

There's no guarantee you won't believe the lie and be lost for all eternity.