

UNPARALLELED DECEPTION AND HATRED

The TRUE Christ (the Lord Jesus Christ) came ministering truth and love. The devil's Christ (the Antichrist) will come administering unparalleled deception (2 Thess. 2:9) and hatred. Jesus described the last half of the coming 7-year tribulation period as a time of "great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world" (Mt. 24:21).

During this time Satan working through Antichrist will be given almost free reign to work his evil in the world and for those who convert to Christ it will be the hardest of times. Apparently, most will die for their faith. It will be the worst of times and it will be the best of times in the sense that I think (perhaps) more people will be saved during this period than have been saved in the whole history of the world up to that point.

In Revelation 7 John saw before the throne an innumerable amount of people from "all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" singing the praises of God who have come out of the "great tribulation" (Rev. 7:9-14).

This time of "great tribulation" will be a time when God's people will be HATED and KILLED universally the world over (Matt. 24:9).

Matthew 24:10 (NKJV)

10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

Hatred is a MAJOR defining reality of depravity and will be highlighted at this point in history. "Offended" is from the Greek word "skandalizo" which literally means "caused to stumble" in the sense of falling spiritually which suggests that these people were previously professing believers.

The idea here is to morally take offense and hence to fall away. The sense here is that of apostasy. These people had some knowledge of the truth but as Paul says in 2 Thess. 2:10 "they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved". They stumble over the truth because they are offended by the cost of associating with it.

"Although they will have had an outward identification with Christ, they will prove by their desertion that they never belonged to Him. When the persecution becomes too severe, they will forsake Christ and join fellow unbelievers in assailing God's people." – John MacArthur

HATRED will be a prominent defining trait of a calloused depraved society at this point. The fruit of the Spirit is first and foremost love (Gal. 5:22-23), but these people are given over to Satan and therefore are characterized by HATRED (Jn. 8:44).

Matthew 24:11 (NKJV)

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Antichrist comes on the scene with a whole army of false prophets and deceivers.

My mentor Dr. John C. Whitcomb served in World War II. He said that Hitler could never have accomplished the havoc that he did if he had not had a whole army of people who thought like he did – who had the same drive – and the same passion that he did. The “spirit” of Hitler was pervasive.

And so it will be with Antichrist. Yes, he will head it up, but he can only be in one place at a time, so he will have in league with him “many false prophets” who will deceive the masses throughout the world.

The last days apostate church sets the stage for the coming of Antichrist and those last days of the church age are said to be “last days perilous times” in which apostasy is the defining trait (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:1-4).

1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

The thing about false prophets is that they are deceptive. They mislead people but they do it in a deceptive manner. It sounds good to the naive. The danger of a false prophet is that he speaks in the lingo of Scripture just enough to be deceptive.

Deception is a major defining trait of the end times. We see this emphasis in Matt. 24:4 where Jesus says, “Take heed that no one deceives you.” We see it in verse 5 where Jesus says, “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.” And then again in verse 11 He says, “many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.”

The best safeguard against deception is to know God’s truth well.

Matthew 24:12 (NKJV)

12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Lawlessness is the idea of being without the restraint of law. In 2 Thess. 2:8-9 the Antichrist is called “the lawless one”. He has no regard for any law other than his own. After all, he claims he is God, and he sets the rules (cf. 2 Thess. 2:7-10).

This “lawless” spirit is seen in Psalm 2 where the rulers of the nations take counsel together against the LORD and His Anointed saying, “Let us break Their bond in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” (Ps. 2:3).

We see this in our day where depravity seeks to defy even the very laws of nature as ordained by God claiming people can choose their own gender. We see this spirit of “lawlessness” in today’s world where there is a tremendous backlash against the whole of the Judeo-Christian ethic on which our society was founded. Again, this is all stage-setting for the Antichrist who brings persecution, hatred, betrayal, deception, and lawlessness to a head.

Without the proper restraint of law, the love of many will grow cold and die out. No one in this

category will care about others anymore. The world will be a calloused place. Depravity is vicious and ugly and unchecked it does the unthinkable.

The emphasis on HATRED is very strong at this point. What is presented is a miserable world full of haters (cf. Titus 3:3).

v. 6 “wars and rumors of wars...”

v. 7 “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”

v. 9 “you will be hated by all nations...”

v. 10 “will hate one another.”

v. 12 “the love of many will grow cold.”

God’s people are marked by His love that aligns with His truth. The devil’s people are characterized by hatred that aligns with his lies.

1 John 4:7–8 (NKJV)

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.