

As wickedness grows and hearts become hardened, there comes a time when people refuse to repent or receive correction. When this happens, the Bible warns that God may give them over to a strong delusion, so that they will believe lies and ultimately perish in their rebellion.

This is not merely a passive allowance from God—it is an act of divine judgment. When truth is consistently rejected, God may withdraw the grace that convicts, and instead permit deception to dominate.

□ A Biblical Foundation

2 Thessalonians 2:10–12 (ESV)

...and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,

in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the

truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

This judgment is sobering. The refusal to love the truth—not merely to hear it, but to embrace and live by it—leads to a condition where a person can no longer recognize lies. The delusion appears logical and even biblical to them. This is the danger of spiritual blindness that is willfully chosen (see Romans 1:24–28).

Examples of Delusion in Scripture

Let us consider biblical examples where individuals resisted God's truth and were eventually handed over to deception.

1. BALAAM – A Prophet for Profit

(Numbers 22–24)

Balaam was a man known to receive revelations from God, yet his heart was not aligned with God's will. When Balak, the king of Moab, tried to hire Balaam to curse Israel, God clearly instructed

Balaam not to go. But Balaam's desire for riches and honor overrode obedience.

Though God later said "Go with them" (Numbers 22:20), this was not divine approval but permissive judgment. The angel of the Lord later confronted him, and his donkey had to save his life—an indication that God was not pleased (Numbers 22:32-33).

This illustrates how God may let a person pursue their own stubborn path once they continually resist His will—what theologians call judicial hardening (see also Proverbs 14:12).

2. KING AHAB – Deceived by His Own Prophets

(1 Kings 22:1-40)

Ahab persistently disobeyed God and led Israel into idolatry. Though warned multiple times, he refused to repent. When he decided to go to war against Ramoth-Gilead, God allowed a lying spirit to deceive him through his own prophets.

1 Kings 22:22-23 (ESV)

And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'

And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.'

Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has declared disaster for you.

This scene reveals the sovereignty of God—He is not the author of sin, but He does allow evil agents to accomplish His just purposes, especially in judgment (see Isaiah 45:7; Romans 11:7-8).

Ahab believed what he wanted to hear and perished.

3. BEN-HADAD – Trusting a False Hope

(2 Kings 8:7–15)

Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, had long been an enemy of Israel and showed contempt for the God of Israel (see 1 Kings 20:28). Despite God's patience, he did not repent. When he fell ill, he sent his servant Hazael to inquire of the prophet Elisha about his recovery.

Elisha gave a cryptic response:

2 Kings 8:10 (ESV)

Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover,' but the Lord has shown me that he shall certainly die.

This was not deception on Elisha's part but a prophetic strategy. The statement "you shall recover" was the politically acceptable response, while the true outcome was death, not from the illness—but by assassination (v. 15). Ben-Hadad believed he would recover and let down his guard, only to be smothered by Hazael.

Again, we see the delusion of false security—a judgment on a king who refused to humble himself before the true and living God.

A Warning for the Church Today

These examples are not just history—they are prophetic warnings for our time. We are in the last days, and deception is at an all-time high.

False teachings have flooded pulpits. We now see preachers:

Justifying sin from the altar

Twisting Scripture to support immodesty and carnality

Preaching prosperity while neglecting repentance and holiness

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (ESV)

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound

teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Many believers now prefer a comfortable lie over a confronting truth. But truth remains truth—even if only a few believe it. Jesus warned that the broad way leads to destruction, and many go that way (Matthew 7:13–14).

How Do We Escape Delusion?

The only way to escape deception is to love the truth. Not just hear it, but love it—even when it rebukes us.

Psalms 119:11 (ESV)

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

John 8:31-32 (ESV)

If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

We must repent of sin, walk in humility, seek holiness, and be lovers of the Word. We need discernment more than ever, because deception often comes clothed in religious language and even uses Scripture.

Final Exhortation

God is faithful. If we remain in Christ, He will keep us from the hour of deception.

Jude 24 (ESV)

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to

present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy...

But this requires intentional faithfulness on our part. We must:

Love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)

Test every spirit (1 John 4:1)

Abide in Christ daily (John 15:4)

Remain watchful and prayerful (Luke 21:36)

Maranatha – Come, Lord Jesus!

May God give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand. Let us walk in truth until the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

Revelation 22:21 (ESV)

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