

Broomfield



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The Deluded Minister

Servants of God Part 5

Sobering Passages

There are sobering passages found throughout God's word. For example Paul said, "I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18). Christ said, "For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:7). And speaking of false Christians, Paul wrote, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Brothers and sisters, there is no question that a portion of the body of Christ consists of men and women who are self-deceived, false Christians, and the deluded. Now the reason that this is so sobering is because I know that there are few children of God who haven't at some time or another concerned themselves with the possibility that they themselves may be the deluded mentioned in the passages I just read. Maybe I'm one of the many who on the last day will hear those horrible words "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23).

What are the marks of a deluded Christian?

What is it that characterizes a sham believer?

We will take up this question as we consider the fourth type of servant in the Kingdom of God: THE DELUDED.

Thus far we have seen three different types of servants,. Samuel illustrates the first of these as the sincere servant.¹ Samuel labored knowing that all that he did was an offering of worship unto the Lord. The second servant is the unseen one illustrated by Hannah.² Though in the background and so not seen, nevertheless her service was essential to the Kingdom of God at the time of Samuel. And indeed this is

¹ Compare 1 Samuel 2:18, 21b

² Compare 1 Samuel 2:19-21a

the norm when it comes to most Christian ministry. The third is found in the self-serving Eli.³ Though Eli knew the Lord, nevertheless his life was characterized by compromise for the sake of self.

And now we turn our focus to the fourth and final servant that can be found in the Kingdom of God — the Deluded.

Consumer Mentality

1 Samuel 2:22, “Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

This verse tells us two things about Hophni and Phinehas and thus the service of the deluded. Let's look at them in order. First of all notice that their service: It is at the expense of the people of God.

1 Samuel 2:22, “Now Eli was very old, **and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel**; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

What exactly is in mind here is unclear. This could reference verses 12-17 and their robbing the Israelites of their offering. However, God ultimately was the one from whom Hophni and Phinehas were stealing. For this reason, we take this to include actions and activities that go beyond verses 12-17.

So what exactly is this referencing? We do not know, except that in all that they were doing, it is clear that the people of God were the ones who paid for it.

And herein is a chief characteristic of deluded individuals in the body of Christ: They consume people. They live off of the people of God. Theirs is not just a poor ecclesiology. Theirs is a bankrupt ecclesiology thinking that the body of Christ is the means to their selfish end.

Jude 12 illustrates the deluded rather vividly.

.Jude was written at a time when love for God had grown cold in many places. False teachers had arisen, and were leading many of God's children astray. While Jude wanted to encourage the people of God by discussing the doctrine of salvation, yet on account of the many false teachers that had arisen in the church, his focus shifted.

Jude 3-4, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, this small epistle was written in order to discuss the person and work of false teachers. With this in mind, notice how Jude describes the deluded individual who serves in the body of Christ:

Jude 12, “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”

³ Compare 1 Samuel 2:20, 22, 23-25

Jude uses three metaphors to describe deluded individuals in the body of Christ — all of which have the same thing in common. They are hidden reefs, clouds without water, and autumn trees without fruit.

What is it that is common to all of these?

All these metaphors give the appearance of blessing at a great cost to the body of Christ. A hidden reef is the shocking discovery that the safe and clear path upon which you are travelling is treacherous. A cloud without water is the grave disappointment in a land of drought that the cloud which at first looked so promising in the end has given nothing at all. An autumn tree without fruit is the sad reality that a tree you have spent all year tending has produced nothing at all.

Such is the nature of deluded people in the body of Christ! According to this passage, they care “only for themselves” They grab, take, suck, or steal all that they can leaving nothing in return but wounded, consumed and hurt people!

This was the service of Hophni and Phinehas in the kingdom of God. On the outside they looked good. Yet when it came to the kingdom of God it was all about them. They fed off the people. They sucked them for all that they could. They would not live so as to honor God and refresh His people, instead they lived for the lust of the flesh and left countless wounded people in their path.

Servants of the Flesh

Such was and is the first characteristic of the service of deluded people. Notice the second mark of a deluded person: Everything is directed at themselves.

1 Samuel 2:22, “Now Eli was very old, **and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.**”

You see in Exodus 38 we read of a ministry in Israel for women who endeavored to serve the Lord on more of a full-time basis. Speaking of the articles of the tabernacle God said this:

Exodus 38:8, “And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookinglasses of the women assembling⁴, which assembled⁵ at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

First off note that the “mirrors” of this passage reference the typical hand-held mirror of the ancient world which was made of burnished metal. And so while, the men of Israel gave their armlets unto the building of the tabernacle and its furnishings⁶ the women here are said to have offered their metal mirrors.

Now having said this, consider this most amazing description of certain women who stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting serving the Lord while we do not have any more specifics about their service in Israel, nevertheless we do know that it was formal. The word used for “assembling/service” here literally means, “organized in bands for war.” And yet, as a word used in reference to the Levitical service⁷ we take this in reference to formal service in the house of the Lord!

⁴ צבא tsaba'

⁵ צבא tsaba' to serve (at sacred tent)

⁶ Compare Exodus 35:22

⁷ Compare also Numbers 4:23, 8:24

So what was their ministry?

Again we don't know. However based on the many passages which exclude women from service in the priesthood and other such official capacities, many scholars suggest that their work was confined to such tasks as cleaning the temple/tabernacle area; singing or dancing at festivals;⁸ and praying and fasting for the people of God.⁹

From all of this we conclude that around each place of divine worship in Israel, women of God — most likely Nazarites¹⁰ — stationed themselves as an act of devotion and piety to the Lord.

Now it was these women whom Hophni and Phinehas defiled such that the worship of God in Israel took on a Canaanite tone. In the perverse and incredibly base religion of the Canaanite, “temple girls” played a large part in their worship. However their purpose and function was to serve as temple prostitutes- as perennial virgins their job among other things was to sanctify the offerer and his offering.¹¹ (

And so, do you understand the service of Hophni and Phinehas?

No doubt familiar with the religion of the Canaanite,¹² they brought the worship of God down to unimaginable levels of depravity.

And why?

The focus of 1 Samuel indicates that it wasn't on account of a misunderstanding of what constituted worship. Rather, it was on account of their fleshly lust. Just as they robbed from God so that they could enjoy the best sacrifice,¹³ so also they defiled women who were devoted to the service of the Lord.¹⁴ Dr. Rayburn wrote:

“You see the similarity between their sins: grabbing for the best meat and taking the women who were near to hand. Whatever pleasure they wanted, they took, with no thought to the holiness of God.”¹⁵

Such is a second characteristic of deluded people in the body of Christ — it's all about their pleasure! As fleshly individuals, their life revolves around satisfying whatever lusts they might have. In fact, far from the concern of Paul who in wrote, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Corinthians 9:27) the deluded in the body of Christ “count it pleasure to riot in the day time . . . having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children” (2 Peter 2:13-14).

Paul describing the deluded says, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is

⁸ Compare Exodus 15:20

⁹ Compare Luke 2:37 for the work of Anna

¹⁰ Compare also Numbers 6:2

¹¹ Compare Hosea 4:14

¹² Compare Numbers 25:1-5; Deuteronomy 23:17; and Amos 2:7-8

¹³ Compare 1 Samuel 2:14, 16

¹⁴ Compare 1 Samuel 2:222

¹⁵ This is taken from unpublished notes on his lectures.

in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Philippians 3:19).

Jude 16, “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.”

Such was the service of Hophni and Phinehas. While on the outside they no doubt looked good. Yet when it came to the Kingdom of God it was all about their pleasure. They believed that God's chief end was their happiness. They twisted the kingdom of God — God’s people — into the purpose of providing for them. Life is about their happiness, their satisfaction, their compliments, their support, their encouragement, and their wealth. Truly while they profess to know God by their very deeds they deny Christ.¹⁶

And so from this we discern two characteristics of the deluded: They are Consumers when it comes to the Body of Christ. They are Servants of their Flesh.

The Person and Work of Christ

Now you think about these two characteristics and you begin to see how this mindset affects their religion and the rest of their lives. While we do not have the time to go into much detail here, nevertheless reason with me as to the deluded's approach to Christ.

What do you suppose is their focus when it comes to the person and work of Christ?¹⁷ Is justification their dying theme? .Is God's glory that around which their life revolves?

Absolutely Not!

To the Deluded justification, propitiation, sanctification are simply doctrines. While they might even be able to give solid definitions of these truths and explain them quite accurately, their focus is on the here and the now. They focus upon the personal benefits that these doctrines give when it comes to their self-esteem, entertainment, fascination, and the need to be right.

For example the doctrine of Justification is important to them only in so far as in explaining the doctrine they get an audience. The cross is important to them only in so far as in professing it, they somehow are personally benefited.

Do you see?

Far from a Person with whom they have deep fellowship and communion, Christ is more of a concept by which to further their agenda.

The Body of Christ

In light of this, what do you suppose will be their approach to the body of Christ?¹⁸

¹⁶ Compare Titus 1:16

¹⁷ Compare 2 Peter 2:1

¹⁸ Compare 2 Timothy 3:6,

Church gatherings will be important to them only in so far as they can get something out of them. For example, if in going to a fellowship gathering their pride is stroked on account of the debate. They can be the center of attention. They are given practical steps on how to make friends and influence people. They can tell others how to be a better parent. They can explain the course to rise up the corporate ladder. They have a fun time. They feel good about themselves. And they will return again and again.

But force them to be a minister, to come to give and be unnoticed, and bless another individual with no thought as to themselves — and not just give a lecture or an opinion — and that gathering will be deemed as dead, dry, or of little worth.

Biblical Authority

What is their view of authority?¹⁹

This is what Jude says:

Jude 8, “Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”

Jude 19, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”

Because they live for pleasure by consuming others, deluded individuals do not understand submission — submission to God much less earthly authority. They are the captain of their own fate, the master of their soul. And so rather than honoring those in authority, they do what they can to sow division. They are critical of God's leaders, and they make their criticism known. They are stains and blemishes in the body of Christ.²⁰

Their Condition

Such is the dreadful outlook of the deluded, which brings us to the question of their condition.

While the genuine child of God's “condition” is one of struggling against sin, and yet in the end growing in their love and devotion to the Lord.²¹

What is the ultimate condition of the Deluded?

1 Samuel 2:25, “If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? **Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.**”

This no doubt has raised many an eye-brow in this congregation over the past couple of weeks. God is a loving God. How is it that He could desire the death of any sinner, much less these two boys?

In fact at first glance, it appears that had Hophni and Phinehas wanted to “hear” their father — if they

¹⁹ Compare Jude 8, 19

²⁰ Compare 2 Peter 2:13

²¹ Compare 1 Samuel 2:21, 26

indeed wanted to repent — God would not have allowed it. Somehow and in some way these two boys angered the Lord, and so now the Lord had it out for them.

Is that what this is saying?

And if not, how do we explain this text?

To answer these questions, let me first ask you a couple of questions.

Do you have a moral problem with the doctrine of the final judgment?

On the last day, there will be countless numbers of men and women who will stand before God and hear those awful words:

Matthew 25:41, “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”

Revelation 20:11-15, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

And so again I ask: Do you have a problem with the final judgment?

Most who love the word of God will say, “No! The idea that a time is coming when believers and non-believers will render account for their deeds does not seem unfair.”

Do you have a problem if there was a time in redemptive history when a generation of Christians enjoyed — before the time — some of the blessings of the coming kingdom?

While we certainly are not in the New Heavens and Earth nevertheless after Christ rose from the dead many beheld and participated in the blessings of heaven and eternity. The Scriptures speaks of one in the Apostolic Age who, “have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Hebrews 6:4-5).

Do any of you feel the urge here to cry foul, unfair, it is not right that some already have enjoyed foretastes of the coming Kingdom!?

I can't believe any of us would have such a response. Rather, most here probably read this text and like me think, I wish I had been there! If that is indeed a small foretaste of glory, imagine what it will be like in that day! Oh, I can't wait to be there.

And so while we do not have a problem with the concept of a final judgment, nor do we have an objection to some enjoying a foretaste of eternity. That then brings me to a final question, ought we therefore to have a problem if some also have received- before the time- a taste of the final judgment?

That is the nuance of the passage before us. When we read that God “desired to put them to death” we are NOT reading about the actions of a Being “ticked off” by some sinner. Nor is it a the story of a divine temper tantrum. RATHER, we are reading about a judicial sentence that has been passed before the time.²² We are beholding a foretaste of the final judgment that awaits all who likewise refuse to listen.

²² Refer to Keil-Delitzch's comments on Exodus 4:21

In other words, the words used in this text are judicial in nature describing the disposition that God will have toward the non-believer on the last day! What you behold here is what will occur when Christ returns! It is just that our text occurred... before the time.

And thus far from reading this passage and charging God with wrong-doing, we read this text and once again are reminded of God's grace! We are reminded of His grace to record such a reality in Scripture. We are reminded of His grace to reveal a foretaste of a coming disposition toward any and all outside of Christ.

It is one thing to read of the wrath of God from Scripture²³ but it is quite another to see this wrath judicially executed. And that brothers and sisters is what we have here.

Romans 15:4, “ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

From this we conclude that what has been written here has been recorded that we might come to know and understand that judgment is not a game it is real! There is coming a day when it will be too late. There is coming a day when the sentence will have been declared. There is a day when the Lord will determine to put them to death.

Let us learn the lesson of Siloam. In Luke 13, while the details are fuzzy, evidently at this time in Christ's ministry the people of God had been shocked by Pilate's recent atrocity. It seems as though a certain group of Galilean Jews wanted for a crime were worshipping in the temple. Now rather than waiting till after their worship to apprehend them, Pilate's soldier's barged into the place of worship and began hacking people to death. The people's amazement and the severity of this latest Roman atrocity demanded a response from Christ.

Luke 13:1-3 (NASB), “Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And He answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.’”

Do you see the point?

While many might suggest that these particular Galileans had it coming to them on account of their sin, Christ spoke otherwise. He said, “As all have sinned, that is what all deserve!”

Now to bring this further home, Christ spoke of another — no doubt — widely talked about disaster- the falling of the tower in Siloam.

Luke. 13:4-5 (NASB, “Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

On account of their poor theology, many Jews would have interpreted this tragedy as a statement of the

²³ Compare specifically Romans 1:18

victim's sin.²⁴ With Job's friends, they believed that whatever happens to you is a reflection of your character. In response Christ said, Your theology is wrong! God doesn't "get you" if you sin — otherwise all would perish. Rather, God allowed this to occur to remind us that a day is coming when we shall stand before God and be judged "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5).

That brothers and sisters is the point of our passage!

Hophni and Phinehas are not wronged here by God. In fact, they have rejected God in a shocking and arrogant way by taking God's portion of the sacrifice, living off of God's people, and defiling the women devoted to the service of God. In essence were saying that "Israel is under new management!"²⁵

Indeed! Let us recognize that their sentence is just!

And as we do so, let us not get hung up by the timing, the fact that God judged them before the time ought not to be received with shock and cries of, "Foul!" Rather, it ought to be seen for what it is, a gracious foretaste of final judgment that WE might not perish!

As I close I present you with a difficult call.

2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Paul did not write this so that a genuine child of God would doubt his salvation. Rather, this is recorded to flush out any who might falsely believe that they are saved when in fact they are not.

So today, moved by the horror of the final judgment as evidenced in the life of Hophni and Phinehas, let us consider the state of our soul. In the words of C. S. Lewis,

"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, 'Thy will be done.'"²⁶

And so I ask you, "What is your will?" Like Hophni and Phinehas is it the satisfaction of your flesh? Is it the promotion and the benefit of yourself?

As you look at your life are you enslaved to your passions and lusts? Do you genuinely have a relationship with Christ? Or are the things of the Lord a means to your personal end?

Oh let us not leave here without Christ! Unlike Hophni and Phinehas, it is not too late for you!

If you have been convicted by this passage, that is a sign that God is prompting you, and so working repentance in your life. Do not ignore the Spirit of God or harden your heart. But come bow before God, and ask God to forgive you. Forsake your sin. And commit yourself to serve in His kingdom for His glory and not your own. And you will be saved to the utmost!

²⁴ Compare John 9:1-3

²⁵ All these crimes were capital crimes deserving death. Compare Leviticus 7:25; 22:9

²⁶ Quoted in Dr. Rayburn's unpublished work.

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About the Preacher

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