

DECEIVED BY A STRONG DELUSION

TEXT: II THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

Introduction:

1. Second Thessalonians 2 deals with events leading up to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The second coming of Christ is mentioned several times in this epistle (1:7-10; 2:8; 3:5), and several times in I Thessalonians.
2. Second Thessalonians 2 also refers to the antichrist, who will be defeated at the second coming of Christ (2:3-9).
3. The Bible teaches that demonic activity will increase in the latter times. Things will get worse and worse as we draw near to the fulfillment of these prophecies.
4. First Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."
5. Our Lord said, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). In the context, our Lord was saying that the days leading up to His second coming will be marked by unbelief and prayerlessness.
6. The apostle Paul said in II Timothy 3:1, "This I know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." The Greek word translated "perilous" means, "hard to take, hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous, harsh, fierce, and savage."
7. Webster's Dictionary defines the word "perilous" as "dangerous."
8. In Matthew 8:28, the same word is translated "exceedingly fierce," and is used to describe demonic possession
9. Satan and his demons are dangerous, harsh, fierce, savage, and "exceedingly fierce."
10. They fiercely oppose the Gospel. And they are masters at brainwashing people. First Timothy 4:1 says they are "seducing spirits." They seduce, deceive, and eventually destroy.
11. Just the other day we read about this singer Amy Winehouse, who died at the age of 27. Satan deceived her, used her, abused her, and then discarded her. That is how Satan works.

I. GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO BE DECEIVED (2:3).

1. First John 3:7 says, "Little children, let no man deceive you."
2. In Matthew 24:4, our Lord said, "Take heed that no man deceive you."

3. Later, our Lord said, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (24:24).
4. In Scripture, we see that those who know the Bible, and stay close to the Lord are not deceived. On the other hand, those who are not right with God are easily deceived (cf. Eph. 4:14; 5:6).
5. There is a growing hostility toward God, toward the Bible, toward the church, and toward Christians. Multitudes are being deceived.
6. Bill O'Reilly is the host of a TV program called "The O'Reilly Factor." It is the most watched cable news television program on American television. Mr. O'Reilly teaches that most people (Roman Catholics, Jews, Hindus, etc.) are going to heaven.
7. No wonder he is so popular! If Mr. O'Reilly ever told that the truth, he would lose his job. People who get their information from television are easily deceived.

II. UNBELIEF AND DISOBEDIENCE LEADS TO DECEPTION (2:10).

1. Second Thessalonians 2:10 tells us why sinners are deceived -- "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."
2. According to the Bible, there will soon come a day when millions of lost sinners will be deceived into following the antichrist. Jesus said, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).
3. This horrible deception will get worse and worse as we get closer to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today there are billions of people deceived by television, Hollywood, false religion, evolution, communism, psychiatry, rock music, drugs, the occult, etc. The devil has countless ways to deceive (cf. II Cor. 4:3, 4).
4. Notice: the devil "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not..." (II Cor. 4:4). Sinners are spiritually blind! And the greatest deception of all is that sinners can get to heaven without faith in Jesus Christ. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:10).
5. I mentioned Mr. O'Reilly getting on his television program and announcing that most people are not going to hell. I went on line and watched the segment, and I copied and pasted the transcript.
6. A liberal minister named McKinney, who was a guest on the program, said he objected to the teaching that Hindus like Gandhi go to Hell.

- He said, "We're turning God into a monster by teaching of a literal Hell."
7. O'Reilly seemed surprised and asked, "Which church teaches that? Which church teaches that? My church doesn't teach that. The Catholic Church doesn't teach that."
 8. MCKINNEY: "Other segments of the church teach a literal Hell for anyone who doesn't accept Jesus."
 9. O'REILLY: "I think that's an extreme position. Let me -- let me define what the Catholic Church's position on this is, all right? 'Non-Christians who seek God with a sincere heart,' which would be Gandhi, 'and move by his grace, try to do his will as they know it through the dictates of conscience, can also be saved without water baptism. They are said to desire implicitly. That is called baptism of desire.'"
 10. Mr. O'Reilly is under s strong delusion, but so are the millions of people who watch his program.
 11. "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:10).
 12. Sinners love their sin. They love their money and the things money can buy. They love their drugs and their alcohol and their cigarettes and their rock and roll and hip hop music and all their worldly pleasures, but they do not love God.
 13. I heard an interesting story about a country boy walking down the road, followed by a pig. It was an unusual sight to see a boy walking down the road followed by a pig. I remember one time in the Philippines seeing a man jogging down the street with a pig running along side of him. That seemed a bit unusual.
 14. Anyway, a man was passing by and he noticed the pig following the boy, and so he said to the boy, "How do you get that pig to follow you?"
 15. And the boy said, "I do it with a bag of beans. I drop a bean here and a bean there and a bean there, and the pig comes along and he follows me, eating up the beans."
 16. And the man said, "Where are you taking the pig?" And the boy said, "To the slaughterhouse."
 17. Beloved, that is how Satan works. He deceives sinners by giving them a few beans here and there, meanwhile he is leading them right to the very gates of hell!

III. GOD FINALLY SENDS THEM A STRONG DELUSION (2:11).

1. Sinners keep saying “no” to God, and "no" to the Lord Jesus Christ, and "no" to the Holy Spirit, "and for this cause" (repeatedly saying "no" to God), "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, that they all might be judged, who believe not the truth."
2. Notice it is God who will send this "strong delusion" (2:11). Their fate is the just and deserved punishment for their wilful and deliberate rejection of God's grace and mercy.
3. John 3:19 says "men loved darkness rather than light," and so God sends them further into darkness, and despair, and confusion, and spiritual blindness.
4. Just as "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2:7); in like manner, this delusion is already in operation. We see it today with the growing acceptance of the so-called "gay movement," (book called *Strong Delusion* by Joe Dallas). America is already deluded, but it will be much worse after the rapture.
5. Let me emphasize that while God sends sinners a strong delusion, He does not send them error. The principle (taught all throughout the Bible) is that since sinners deliberately choose falsehood (false religion, evolution, homosexuality, etc.) in direct defiance of God's Holy Word, God subjects them to the power of the error they have chosen for themselves (cf. Proverbs 5:21-23).
6. This strong delusion is the inward working of the inevitable consequences of error. We see it with Esau; we see it in the life of Balaam; we see it with Pharaoh; we see it with Judas Iscariot, etc.
7. Sinners reject the truth, and after a while, God gives up on them (cf. Romans 1:24-28).
8. Sinners fall under the influence of an evil power working within them, which leads them further and further away from the truth of God's Word. Since they deliberately reject the Gospel, God uses their choice of evil as the instrument to punish their sin.
9. This strong delusion involves believing a lie (II Thess. 2:11). What is this lie? In this context, Paul is referring to the lie of the antichrist (cf. 2:4).

10. We can trace this all the way back to the serpent's lie in the Garden of Eden, when he told Eve, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).
11. After getting caught, Eve said to God, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13). And he has been beguiling people ever since!
12. This is Satan's lie that men do not need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they do not need to obey God, that they do not need to worry about the coming judgment, there is no hell, etc.
13. People who go to séances and contact demons are told by these lying spirits that there is no such place as hell, that you do not have to believe in Jesus Christ to be saved, etc. This is the devil's "lie" (2:11).
14. People can hear the same lie from pulpits all over America.
15. The lie takes many different forms, but it all boils down to a rejection of the Gospel.
16. Twice God says men perish because they reject the truth (2:10, 12).
17. Revelation 21:8 says "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." It is a sad reflection on mankind that men hate the truth but love to lie.
18. Notice the contrast: "believed not the truth" (2:12), -- they rejected the truth... "but had pleasure in unrighteousness {they love sin}" (2:12).
19. Sinners have no pleasure in God's Word or in Bible preaching or in attending a church service like this. Sinners take "pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thess. 2:12) -- in the dirty jokes, in the trashy movies, in the drinking parties, in rap and rock "music," etc.
20. God has been patient; and God has been longsuffering. God has given sinners many opportunities to repent.
21. Only judgment is left for them. "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth..." (2:12).
22. When sinners reject the Gospel, and turn their backs on God's love and God's grace, there is nothing left but the judgment of God (cf. II Thess. 1:7-9).
23. The Greek word translated "delusion" is *plane*. It means "to wander," or "to cause to wander," "to lead astray," and "to deceive."

24. Our English word "planet" comes from this Greek word *plane*. In ancient times, the astronomers looked up in the sky and saw that some stars seemed to wander, to move around, so they called them "planets."
25. What a vivid description of lost souls! They wander here and there, to and fro, seeking some thrill, some worldly pleasure -- winning the lottery, going to a party, playing on the computer, watching nonsense on the television, etc.
26. Jude 13 says they are "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

CONCLUSION:

1. In the Bible we find certain laws. These laws are as real as the law of gravity. Last week I preached on the law of asking and receiving.
2. Recently I preached on the law of sowing and reaping. These are spiritual laws, though true in the physical realm as well.
3. Here in our text today, we find another spiritual law. There is a spiritual law that when a man repeatedly says "no" to God, God confirms him in that rejection (cf. Proverbs 1:22-33).
4. In the days of Noah, God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3). And after Noah preached for 120 years, and repeatedly warned them of God's judgment, God shut him in the ark.
5. And the rain began to fall and the waters began to rise, and then the people went to the door of the ark and pounded on the door, "Noah! Open the door!"
6. But Noah could not open that door, because God shut the door.
7. We see the same thing in the parable of the five foolish virgins. While the five who were wise entered in, the five who were foolish went to buy oil for their lamps; and when they came back, the door was shut. And they said, "Lord, Lord, open to us" (Matthew 25:11).
8. "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. 25:12). God shut that door and it was too late for the foolish virgins.
9. In I Samuel 16:14, we read these frightening words: "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him."
10. Our Lord said in Matthew 12:32, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

11. The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their unbelief. He convinces them of their need for salvation. But many sinners keep saying "no" the Holy Spirit.
12. P.P. Bliss wrote that great invitation hymn, "Almost Persuaded."
13. "Almost persuaded" now to believe;
"Almost persuaded" Christ to receive;
Seems now some soul to say,
"Go, Spirit, go Thy way,
Some more convenient day
On Thee I'll call."
14. But that "more convenient day" never does come. And God sends them a strong delusion and they die and go to hell. Ecclesiastes 11:3 says, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.."
15. I have seen a couple of deathbed conversions, but most sinners die the way they lived. They had no time for God in life, and they do not seek Him in death.