

Deceivers

By Ken Wimer

Bible Text: 2 John 7
Preached on: Wednesday, January 12, 2011

Shreveport Grace Church
2970 Baird Road
Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: www.shrevegrace.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

All right. If you will, look with me in your Bibles to 2 John. There is just this one chapter, but my text is in verses seven through 13 and I would like to speak with you about John's warnings here concerning deceivers.

How tender the Word was to this elect lady whether an individual woman who was one of the Lord's along with her children or whether this is symbolism of the Church. Either way the truth stands and he writes in tenderness to exhort her to continue in the truth.

But just as any portion of the Word we find substance to what is written. It is just not an empty salutation. And here we see John's concern. And so the reason for his writing is, first, he rejoiced, as we saw in verse four, "greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth."¹

But now he warns her and her children against deceivers.

One of the things about deceivers is the reason they can deceive and do deceive is because it is a little bit of truth wrapped in error. And that is what characterizes them. And so we will read this in 2 John verse seven.

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

¹ 2 John 4.

Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.²

I remember when I first went back to Africa as a, quote, unquote, missionary. I felt having grown up there that I was prepared for being able to work in that country, the country of the Ivory Coast. And I can remember right from the get go having to be careful who you trusted right from the airport.

We arrived very late in the evening and didn't really have a place to go to and there was another, again, so-called missionary that was on the airplane that was telling us about the country and telling us about, you know, how we needed to be careful even with people that offer to take your bags at the airport. You had to be careful even with the armed guards that were there. I mean, we walk in and here is these machine guns and they are pulling you aside and wanting to look in your bag and you really don't know who to trust, your taxi driver. And you got your guard up.

And they are slick. You know, they know their business. If you are not careful they will strip you of everything you have got in a moment's notice. And I thought about that as John writes here, "For many deceivers are entered into the world."³

They come up very friendly. "Oh, you are just arriving? Well, let me help you. Let me take care of you." And a number of foreigners in such situations have ended up being robbed or, you know, beaten up, their money taken and it is just the case. So your guard is up because you are a target.

Well here the first thing I would note concerning what John writes is the number of deceivers. I don't think we are fully aware just how many—and that is the word that John uses here—"For many deceivers are entered into the world."⁴

This is talking about false religion. But it is talking about people that go out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that use his name whom the Lord himself addressed when he said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"⁵

And the Lord will say unto them—this is just quoting from Matthew seven—the Lord will say unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."⁶

That is hard for some people to swallow, to think that the very man that is standing up in

² 2 John 7-13.

³ 2 John 7.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Matthew 7:22.

⁶ Matthew 7:23.

that pulpit and preaching for them week in and week out may be one of those of whom the Lord will say one day, "I never knew you."⁷

So this is the warning. You know, "Broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction."⁸

I came to this conclusion years ago after the Lord opened my own heart and mind to Christ and taught me that I was lost. When I look back at my education I ask myself: How could I have been so deceived? But it was a preacher factory. I was raised to go to school and, you know, prepare for the ministry. This was the whole emphasis in Church meetings of bringing in different special speakers and getting you to come forward and dedicate your life to the Lord. And, you know, they were looking for recruits. It was a recruiting. And, you know, I fell for it. And they got me in their hook. You know, I went all the way through college and seminary fully believing that I was going out and that I was going to do something to change the world.

And the Lord let me ride on that horse for a while before he brought me low and taught me that I was lost. This was an issue that when I came back to the States that the congregation that had sent me out could not accept. They became angered and I remember one particular lady in asking her what it is that angered her so much about me standing up and declaring that I had been lost, but the Lord had drawn me to himself. And her answer was very simple, that, "If I accept your testimony of what the Lord did, that means I am lost."

And for that reason she couldn't accept it. She fell back on her own profession.

You know, we cannot convict others of their sin or their lost estate. That is not our job to do. That is the Spirit's work to do. All I can tell you is how the Lord led me and now he is pleased to teach me and when he did open my eyes realize that I for years was that deceiver because I was pointing men to something other than Christ. And when I look back, you know, I began preaching when I was 17 years of age, far too early. I was put in a preacher's contest of all things by a youth director and put up on stage.

I still remember the text. I hadn't a clue as to what the meaning was, but it was Hebrews 5:11-12. And it was scripted. I was coached. And then we had the big day. And I came in second, you know, in the contest. So they said, "Well, you are an alternate. If the first doesn't go to the national championship, then you will go."

You know, so that is how I got started.

And I look back with great regret on it right now thinking about, you know, how [?] it is to know Christ and be found in him, you know, whether the Lord ever puts you behind a pulpit or not, to know that I am that sinner that the Lord was pleased to redeem by his grace.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Matthew 7:13.

So I know something about deceivers and, you know, it is not just a matter of changing religions or of embracing right doctrine. Because I followed that path and was still lost. You know, I tried to work this thing out in my mind. I am a muller. I will get a hold of something and just mull it, turn it over in my mind, you know, looking for what is the right thing to do or the right thing to say. And, you know, when I... even before going out to Africa got a hold of the book *The Sovereignty of God* I embraced some doctrine. I embraced some truth. And I began to preach it. But it is like trying to put new wine in old wineskins. Sooner or later that old wineskin is going to burst and that is how the Lord directed in my heart and taught me.

You know, it is not so much believing in the doctrine of total depravity, because that is what I moved from. I moved from kind of a modified free will type religion into, you know, full blown Calvinism. And I felt at that time that if I just preached the five points of Calvinism I was preaching the truth. And you know, TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement and irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints. Those are all things I have tried to mix into a message. I thought if I had that outline whatever passage I could take and fit it into it, they were going to hear it.

Until the Lord was pleased to stop me and show me, you know, you can dot your I's and cross your T's all you want to about total depravity, but has he shown you your own depravity? That is the question. You can preach all day long about unconditional election, but the Lord caused me to see that it is all about the gracious Father taking a worthless sinner and putting him in the hands of Christ from eternity. I had nothing to do with it. He was pleased to show me mercy, choose me out. And when you see it, the Lord causes you to see it you cry, "Why me?" Because you look around and see so many others that seemingly are just like... it is like goats just walking over a cliff, you know, or swine going headlong into destruction.

You know, limited atonement. I could define it, you know, and talk about Christ's particular death. And even the understanding, ok, atonement is the wrong word. We need to define it as particular redemption. All of that intellectually I figured out, but still was lost until the Lord was pleased to show me that, you know, if everybody else had been righteous but me, that it would still have required the death of the Lord Jesus Christ to save one like me.

And irresistible grace, you know, it is not just a definition, but to understand it was the Lord who took this sinner and brought him up and that was a gracious thing even though it meant separation from friends, acquaintances, associates, people that I had known for years. And yet I could not resist that grace. He was graciously separating me out and drawing me to Christ whether anybody else followed or not. It is like being caught in a current and at first you panic, but then you realize, no, this is a gracious current, because it is leading to the water of life that is Christ.

And, you know, we talk about the perseverance of the saints, but I learned it is the preservation of the saints. It is God keeping me, else I would not keep myself and all of that in Christ, all through what he worked out.

And so you sit and listen to preachers. It is not that you are trying to be critical. You don't. I will turn on the radio and I will look for the true sound. You know, Paul wrote of that in Corinthians, that unless the trumpet sounds a clear sound, how are those that hear going to know whether to attack or retreat.

So you listen for a true sound and all of the sudden you get... it kind of goes for a while. It is like listening to somebody singing. They start off with a good note and then all of the sudden it is just... you sit there and think, boy, that is flat. And then it gets worse. And even that you are sitting there plugging your ears thinking, stop! You know?

And when the Lord gives you ears, that is how you listen. It is not that you want to be critical, but you come away saying, "Something is not right. Something is not right."

But just know that there are many deceivers are entered into the world. They have been sent out. You know, Christ said of the Pharisees, "For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."⁹

That is modern evangelism. You know, preacher factories.

Think about how many schools are set up and designed to send out preachers today. The world is flooded with people that have been prepared and taught just like you would prepare to be a lawyer, you prepare to be a doctor and make their enter into the world. Preachers are doing it. They are filling pulpits. They are expanding organizations, but yet deceivers if they have never been taught of Christ.

So that is the first thing. The second here is not on the number of deceivers, but the character. When he says here, "Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."¹⁰

This is where many are deceived because we are talking about a lot of supposed good men, moral men by men's standards. They will show kindness. If someone gets sick they are the first to be there at the hospital to take care of them. If there is a funeral they are the first to go and comfort the family. And yet what sets them apart as far as their character and their deception is in their message. It says here, "Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the world."

So being deceivers, the first thing that could be said about them is that they are seducers. They get men to follow them. They set themselves up as examples and it might be in character and conduct. They are very careful to live upright lives. And they preach it. They preach morality. They preach morality as a righteousness, something that you will need in order to prove that you are a true child of God. And so you get a lot of people that outwardly are moral.

⁹ Matthew 23:15.

¹⁰ 2 John 7.

The reality is if you could really see their heart, if we could put it up on, you know, on a screen, everybody would be appalled, the preacher included. But those things are hidden. You know, you can be sitting smiling and shaking your head and yet the heart be far from the Lord. And but they seduce others causing them to... To deceive means to influence away from the truth. That is how they are deceivers.

Christ said of the Pharisees, “Ye have taken away the key.”¹¹ Their key is Christ and he was very bold in telling them, “Not only do you not enter into the kingdom, but you prohibit those who would otherwise were they able to see.”

So this is their character. They pretend to be ministers of the Word. They can take this same Bible and pretty much preach anything. You can preach a tradition. You can preach a ceremony. You can preach an example. But unless taught of Christ they cannot really preach Christ. And therein lies the difference.

There is not a love for the truth. Many are more concerned about maintaining their position as pastor or leader because of the following they have than to exalt Christ. They are more concerned about their popularity and what people think of them, than they are for men’s souls. They have a view of how they are coming over rather than a view of the glory of God. And therefore their error is... a deceiver is an imposter. They are imposters. And they handle the Word deceitfully. They handle Christ deceitfully. And many people because they are blind and lost don’t hear the difference. They can’t see the difference. They just blindly follow someone.

It is like one person said, “Well, that is what we pay the preacher for. We pay him to tell us what we are to believe. So, you know, how can we be responsible for him being wrong?”

Well, there is no where in the Bible that says to check your brain at the door when you come and sit down, that we have this work. We are to open it and read it prayerfully. Ask the Lord to direct us. But this is a consistent warning throughout Scripture. Weigh everything according to the Word because there are many deceivers gone out in the world that handle the Word of Christ deceitfully.

In the first epistle of John if you look in 1 John two and verse 18 John reiterated this in his first epistle.

He said, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”¹²

It is the last hour.

¹¹ Luke 11:52.

¹² 1 John 2:18.

That is the strong language. You know, this antichrist. To not give all the glory to Christ, to not exalt him in this Word, he is the Word, he is... To be a deceiver—and John uses the same language over here in 2 John seven. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. People are busy about trying to figure out who the antichrist is and they have got him standing in the pulpit because they are not pointing sinners to Christ. They don't know him and therefore cannot lead or point sinners to Christ.

In 2 Peter chapter two we find the same warning that Peter gives. So this isn't just John out here on a tangent, somehow out of balance. No, he is warning out of love for men's souls and the glory of God.

In 2 Peter two beginning with verse one, "But there were false prophets also among the people."¹³

He is talking about in the Old Testament, in the congregation of Israel.

"...even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."¹⁴

When it is talking about the Lord that bought them he is referring back to the symbolic deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. That is what he is referring to, that Passover Lamb that was slain. So he is using them as a type. How many of those saw the Lamb slain and came out of Egypt and yet perished in the wilderness following the false prophets among them?

And it says, "Many," verse two, "shall follow their pernicious ways."¹⁵

You know, when people say, "Well you are really cutting out a lot of people. You are too narrow."

Well, look at the language of Scripture, damnable heresies. He didn't just say, "Many shall follow their ways," to kind of soft pedal it. But "many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."¹⁶

They preach a Christ in such a way that is palatable to men so that when a true gospel preacher comes and exalts him as he is in all his glory, they take offense. Their people take offense.

"That is now how we have been taught. That is not how our pastor preaches."

Their standard is others and it is preachers.

¹³ 2 Peter 2:1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 2 Peter 2:2.

¹⁶ Ibid.

“Let me ask my preacher. Let me talk to my preacher and see what he thinks.”

So the way, notice, the way of truth, an exclusive gospel that gives all the glory to Christ is therefore evil spoken of. And it says, “And through covetousness...”¹⁷

It may be money or salary but it may be something as simple as their own glory.

You know, you say, “Why do some men preach?”

Well, they like it. They like the attention. They like the authority. They like the fact that, you know, they can manipulate people.

“Through covetousness shall they...”¹⁸ notice, not just with words, but feigned words. There is deception, something that is feigned. It is not true. It is pretense is what it is.

And, notice, “make merchandise of you.”¹⁹

The only thing they care about is how many people they can get into a building and outgrow the building and build a bigger building because the one down the street, you know, we have got to keep up with them or surpass them. That is why you have got a First Baptist and you have got a Second Baptist. You know, Second Baptist is trying to outdo the First.

They “make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not,”²⁰ and it says, “their damnation slumbereth not.”²¹

Sooner or later they are going to face the very God that they pretended to represent and as it speaks of in Revelation it is the wrath of the Lamb. We talk about two words that don't seem to go together. But sooner or later their judgment will be certain.

So that is the characteristic. They profess to believe in Christ as a good man, as a prophet, as a teacher even as a healer or even as messenger from God, but coming back here to 2 John and verse seven it says, “Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”²²

And there is a lot more there than just saying, “Well, I believe he came in the flesh.” It is who came. It is why he came. It is what he accomplished in the flesh. All of that is summed up here in this statement.

¹⁷ 2 Peter 2:3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² 2 John 7.

You know, there is nothing new under the sun. I know we talk about different camps of doctrine and believe me. I have been through them all. It is like refugee camps. There is no permanent dwelling. You keep kind of changing from... you wander from one to another until the Lord teaches you. You know the strongest deceivers probably that most of the world hears from are free willers. They are people that exalt the will of man above Christ all the while preaching Christ. But ultimately they make salvation to depend upon you deciding.

I was talking to a man today that is an acquaintance of mine and he has a policy, an Aflac policy with me and I had to call him up for some information. And, you know, he is one of these motorcyclists that goes around on weekends evangelizing. They ride around on motorcycle. They pull into towns and they make a big noise and people come around and they try to get people saved. And he told me that today. He said, "Boy, I keep trying to convince people, you know, that they need to make their choice, their decision for Jesus."

And I said, "Well, how is that going?"

He said, "It is tough. It is tough."

And I just said to him, very kindly. I said, "Well, you know what? It is like anything. If you talk somebody into it, someone else can come in and talk them out of it." I said, "Pat, as far as my own understanding and my lostness before the Lord opened my eyes," I said, "I used to think that it was my choice and my decision. But the Lord has since caused me to see that if he had left me to myself I would have been condemned."

He said, "Well, you are right. You are right there."

I don't know... you know, it was a conversation. But, you know, there are many deceivers that lead people to believe that their profession, their walking an aisle, their hope is that they made the right choice. They did the right thing. People are deceived.

So I as in that camp for a while. You know, I think back all the way to high school where we tried to get as many of the senior class saved as we could. And I remember as the Lord taught me by his Spirit of Christ going back and actually writing letters, as many as I could get a hold of writing letters back to them and telling them, "I deceived you." That if you are... your hope is based upon what I told you back in high school, you are lost. There is only one out of that whole senior class today that still stays in touch with me. The others have gone their way and they have believed strongly in that profession that they made. I can remember their names. I remember their faces. They won't turn back. But there is one that continues to get our bulletins and has asked for CDs. Now he can get them off the internet and he told me that, you know, he listens. He is reading. He may be, you know, one of the Lord's, but I am... there are many deceivers among so-called Calvinists. You know? Many lost Calvinists.

You say, "How can you say that? They preached total depravity, you know, sovereignty of God. They preach particular redemption, all these things."

So did I.

But I will tell you as I listen to some of these—and it is subtle—there... they preach up faith. They preach up repentance. They exalt these graces above Christ.

One of the best writings I ever read was by a man who wrote a book, *Not Faith, But Christ*. It wasn't faith that was sacrificed on the cross. It was Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And again for years I was deceived. I would try to instruct men on coming to repentance and faith in Christ, because that is what I had been taught. They would say, "This is the right way to preach."

But even that, stop and think about it. It is subtly wrong. The Spirit does not bring us to repentance and faith in Christ. He brings the lost sinner to Christ in repentance and faith.

Now I don't know if you hear the difference, but it is important. The Spirit's work is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work. And if he opens your heart and so teaches you, you will come to him. That is that irresistible grace and you will come in faith and you will come in repentance. But it is to Christ that you will be going. Repentance is not our Savior. Faith is not our Savior. Christ is the Savior. Christ is the Redeemer.

And, you know, people again just like we read, they will use this against you. You know, how many people have listened to me and said, "You don't believe in faith. You don't believe in repentance."

And my answer is, "Not where you put it. You put the cart before the horse."

You know, my... I truly believe if I can... if the Lord will enable me just to exalt Christ and set him forth and the debt he paid for sinners for lost sinners that he knows who they are, that in his time he is going to have every one of them. He will draw them to himself. Christ said that.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."²³

He is talking about all those that the Father gave him, from every tribe, kindred and nation and tongue.

I don't have to work or convince people of faith. Just like I said earlier, you can't convince another person of their sin. You certainly cannot convince them to believe. But if I exalt Christ—and that is all he said to do—exalt him, lift him up, he will draw them unto himself.

²³ John 12:32.

“My sheep hear my voice.”²⁴

They don't hear your voice. Your voice is just an instrument to communicate to them the urgency of Christ and what he has accomplished. And... but many are deceived. They have a strong grip on the doctrines of grace, so-called, which, again, is an error because the Scriptures never talk about doctrines. And we are going to see this next time here in verse nine.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ...”²⁵

You know, it is one doctrine pertaining to Christ.

And then there are many that are what they call sacramentalists. We deal with a lot of those. That is, you know, their faith is in their baptism. Their faith is in their works. Their faith is in some ceremony, you know, the sacraments. Their faith is in a marriage that took place that was blessed by some priest or some, you know, they count that important, keeping religious holidays and things like that. It is an outward form of religion.

But it is a denial of Christ because anywhere you look other than to the Lord Jesus Christ for your hope is a deception. It is false and, you know, we can't even tie our hope or profession to someone who even preached the truth, you know, the... I know the instrument that the Lord used to open my eyes. But it wasn't that man that opened my eyes. It was the Spirit of God. I can't remember a thing about what he said, but I do remember the portion of Scripture that the Lord used to open my eyes out of Isaiah six. It is clear as day.

Whether that man stands or falls, he is the Lord's to do with what he will. But I am thankful my salvation doesn't depend upon that man staying true to the Word. The Lord may have used him as an instrument and then cast him aside. Even Paul said that, didn't he? Didn't he pray that after having preached to others he himself not be found as a reprobate and cast off, cast away?

So, you know, this what John says here in John seven and we didn't get far, but I hope the Lord will bless it.

“Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”²⁶

That is the object of truth is Christ. He is the truth. His coming in the flesh. Why did he come? Who is this that came? What did he accomplish? That is the hope of salvation. That is why John wrote in verse eight, “Look to yourselves.”²⁷

²⁴ John 10:27.

²⁵ 2 John 9.

²⁶ 2 John 7.

²⁷ 2 John 8.

You know, he couldn't even determine who was the Lord's and who wasn't even though he was an apostle who leaned upon the Lord's breast. He just said, "Look to yourselves., that we lose not those things which we have wrought."²⁸

He is talking about having labored in the gospel only to see them make a false profession and die in their sins, but that we might receive a full reward. He is not talking about crowns in heaven. The full reward is the rejoicing of knowing that when it is all said and done, the Lord has truly done a work in your heart and taught you of him.

Let's take our hymn books and sing hymn number 351.

²⁸ Ibid.