



Spiritual Warfare: Pulling Down Strongholds

2 THESSALONIANS 2:6-12
LESSON 2 – DELUSIONS AND UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION
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The Source of Delusions

- ▶ The Source of Delusions and Deception: The world lives under the sway of the devil, the spirit of the age. But the church must rest assured that the delusions that dominate the thinking of the lost is sent to them, not from the evil, but by the Lord! He has turned the world over to their delusions, giving them what they want as they refuse to glorify Him as God. We must not be surprised then to learn that the world is indeed delusional and in their wickedness they are convinced that what is good is evil and what is evil is good. How do we determine what is good and right? By the Word of God.
- ▶ Lamentations 2:14 Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not uncovered your iniquity, to bring back your captives, but have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.
- ▶ Zechariah 10:2 For the idols speak delusion; the diviners envision lies, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; they are in trouble because there is no shepherd.

The Source of Delusions

- ▶ Isaiah 66:3(b) Just as they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations, 4 So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight.”
- ▶ The Source of Delusions is our Sovereign Lord. For what purpose?
- ▶ Reprobation and Judgment!

The Purpose for Delusions

- ▶ 2 Thess. 2:6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The Purpose for Delusions

- ▶ The mystery of lawlessness is already at work.
- ▶ This is the working of Satan by means of works of power, signs, lying wonders, and unrighteous deception.
- ▶ Accomplished among those who are perishing.
- ▶ Who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved – reprobation. In the decree of election they have been passed over and left in their sin.
- ▶ “If God has chosen some for salvation, and He has not chosen everyone, then it follows that some are not elect.” – John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 221
- ▶ As the preaching of the gospel in the power of God to salvation for those who believe (the elect), then these delusions are the mechanism whereby the reprobate are passed over and left for judgment. God uses means.

The Purpose for Delusions

- ▶ Just as there is a Book of Life, there is a Book of Condemnation – Jude 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were **marked out for this condemnation**, ungodly men...
- ▶ Jesus spoke in parables precisely to conceal the truth from those who are not chosen to know it (Matt. 13:13-14; Isa. 6:9-10).
- ▶ Romans 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

The Purpose for Delusions

- ▶ Romans 9:19 19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

The Purpose for Delusions

- ▶ Back to 2 Thess. 2, God will send them strong delusions that they should believe the lie, that they might be condemned. They are condemned already because they have not believed the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
- ▶ John 3:18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

The Father of Lies

- ▶ There are Two Kingdoms – Col. 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
- ▶ John 8:37 “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” 39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

The Father of Lies

- ▶ 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Unable to Listen

- ▶ John 10:24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” 25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. 30 I and My Father are one.” 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” 33 The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

Nothing New

- ▶ Isaiah 6:9 And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ 10 “Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.” 11 Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered: “Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, 12 The Lord has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
- ▶ Delusions lead to destruction. So at the heart of spiritual warfare is a proclamation of the truth both to those who will be freed by believing it and those who are already condemned for having believed the lie.
- ▶ Next Week: Lesson 3 - The Weapons of our Warfare