

Deluding Influences

New Year 2021

HBC 12/27/20

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

I want to turn your attention to the proverbial “big picture.” In the days of Antichrist, God will send a **deluding influence** to seal the fate of those who persist in following Satan. While we're being proverbial, I want to help you see the proverbial **forest** instead of diverting your time to inspecting individual **trees**. First, a relevant Bible text, then some exhortations.

I. God Sends Delusion (11)

2 Thessalonians 2:11: *For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,*

Because of **the apostasy** (2:3) which will follow the rapture—the massive and final abandonment of Christianity by pseudo-believers who were in churches prior to the rapture but did not actually believe—the antichrist will rise to world power, energized by Satan himself. Because people will have rejected the truth by their own choices and actions, they will not have loved the truth so as to be saved (verse 10). **For this reason**—because they reject the truth and follow the antichrist, God will harden them in their unbelief. This is a significant part of how the antichrist will be able to get away with what he will do.

The purpose of this is **so that they might believe what is false**, referring to everything the antichrist does. He gets people to believe evil is good and error is truth. It offends the sensibilities of many people to read the clear statement **God will send upon them a deluding influence**. There's no problem understanding the sentence:

<p style="text-align: center;">God—the subject of the sentence will send—the verb, a deluding influence—the direct object of the verb, upon them—the indirect object of the verb.</p>

But for many people there is a BIG problem with letting it mean what it says. If you haven't yet figured this out, don't beat yourself up. You're in good company! Among those whose company you're in is the prophet **Habakkuk**. God told Habakkuk that Israel was going to be chastened for their disobedience. Habakkuk understood, but how could it be that God would use wicked Chaldeans? So Habakkuk asked God:

Habakkuk 1:13: *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil,
And You can not look on wickedness with favor.
Why do You look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up
Those more righteous than they?*

Habakkuk 2:4: *Behold, as for the proud one,
His soul is not right within him;
But the righteous will live by his faith.*

God says that **He is in control and will use even those who are not right with Him!** In its context, **the righteous will live by his faith** means Habakkuk and the people should continue to trust God, even when they could not see any way things were going to work out for them, and even when they could not understand the ways of God within their sense of righteousness.

II. Men Reject Truth (12)

2 Thessalonians 2:12: . . . *in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*

You either **believe the truth**, which leads you to faith in Jesus Christ and constant progress toward holiness, or you take **pleasure in wickedness**. There is no middle ground. **All will be judged who did not believe the truth**. There are no exceptions—never have been, and never will be any exceptions.

How can it be that God, one of whose attributes is **truth**, can “**send**” a **deluding influence** on the world? Let's look back to the record of how Pharaoh dealt with Moses and Israel, and you see a one-man illustration of what will happen on a world-wide scale in the end times.

Exodus 8:15: *Pharaoh hardened his heart*
Exodus 8:32: *Pharaoh hardened his heart*
Exodus 9:34: *Pharaoh hardened his heart*

After giving Pharaoh repeated opportunities to obey Him and to be gracious to His people, and **after** Pharaoh hardened his heart, **then** it says **six times** that **God hardened Pharaoh's heart** (Exodus 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8.).

Now look at the same idea on a wider scale, and we get to pull back a bit of the curtain to see how it happens. In the days when **Jehoshaphat** was king of Judah and **Ahab** was the king of Israel, God dealt in a similar way with a group of 400 at once.

Ahab wanted to attack the king of Aram in order to take back the city of Ramoth-gilead, and he wanted Jehoshaphat's military support to do it. Ahab was a **wicked** king and he had a cohort of 400 prophets who would tell him whatever he wanted to hear.

1 Kings 22:5: *Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “Please inquire first for the word of the LORD.”*

1 Kings 22:6: . . . *“Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.”*

1 Kings 22:7-8: *But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of him?” And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is*

yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, **but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.**"

They sent for **Micaiah**, who saw he was outnumbered 400 to 1. Micaiah explained that this entire fiasco was under the control of God who was allowing the consequences of Ahab's sin to be the earthly judgment for his foolishness and deceit. **God allowed Satan to deceive all the false prophets.**

1 Kings 22:19-23: And Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' And the Lord said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be **a deceiving spirit** in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.' Now therefore, behold, **the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.**"

Did you see it? **God sent Satan and his dupes to do what would fulfill His plan.** If that makes your brain overheat, enjoy the warmth! It's true.

End of our passage. Now let's apply it to our days.

With the decline of honest and unbiased journalism and the rise of social media, we are awash in a sea of confusion. It wasn't until the last five years or so that you heard the term **Fake News**. Now when you read something, especially online, it takes twice as long to check out the sources to see if it's genuine, as it does to read the article.

You also hear about **conspiracy theories**. A conspiracy theory is *a belief that some covert but influential organization is responsible for a circumstance or event*. A conspiracy theory rejects the generally-accepted explanation of an event or phenomenon and instead credits a covert group or organization with carrying out a secret plot.

Do you know that there is a conspiracy theory about the origin of the term **conspiracy theory**? The conspiracy theory says that the CIA invented the term **conspiracy theory** in 1967 in order to discredit and insult the people who questioned the official version of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. In reality (*a region boycotted by conspiracy theorists*), the term came into use in the 1870's and began to be used more frequently in the 1950's. You can reject almost every conspiracy theory simply by thinking through how many **people** in how many **places** would need to be in constant communication with one another and every one of them maintain complete secrecy, in order for the plan to work.

Here's my point. There is **one conspiracy** that matters. All the rest, whether they be absurd speculation, or even if they have an element of truth in them, are **irrelevant**. I beg you not to waste your time on them. There **are** people who want to bring the world under the domination of one central government. They reason they want it is that they are **victims of Satan's plan**. They are **blind** to the truth. They do not need us to coalesce into

a mighty voting bloc, ***they need us to preach the gospel***. The most important thing is not for us to convince them of the error of their political and economic policies. They need us to present the Savior to them. They need the church to be the Church, a collection of people growing in holiness and in zeal to spread the gospel, no matter the cost.

We are setting the table for the events of the Tribulation. Regardless of what you think of what has been done lately, ***can you spot the table-setting?*** Seize a crisis, and get people from widely diverse backgrounds, even those who hate each other, to work together and to implement similar programs to control behavior. Devastate as many businesses as possible, to make people desperate for government “assistance,” which always leads for increasing government control. Have our government print up several trillion dollars they don't have, to send out so we can afford lessons to learn Chinese.

The Antichrist will perfect the principles of globalism that so many are now experimenting with, stumbling along with a combination of humanistic altruism, spiritual blindness, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, and their own drive for more and more power.

While we set the table, ***preach the gospel!***

<p><i>Romans 8:28: And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.</i></p>
--