

#276 "The Great Delusion"

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In the Book of Revelation, God is seen pouring out His just wrath on an unbelieving world. In Revelation 6:16-17, wicked mankind tries to hide under rocks just to avoid Jesus. They do not want Him to come and force them to stop their sinful ways and wicked existence. They realize His power, preeminence, and coming judgment, but they absolutely hate Him for it. They love their wickedness so much that they hate the only One Who could set them free from eternal condemnation and a life enchained to the devil (2 Timothy 2:26). Their minds and hearts are clouded by a great delusion.

Before Christ's final descent to earth at His second coming, God will send two witnesses to proclaim the gospel throughout the earth. After their ministry is done, God will allow the antichrist to kill them in the street. Revelation 11:10 says, "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth." God will resurrect the two prophets, but, during the period in which the people of the earth think that they are finally done with having to listen to gospel preaching, they will throw a party and exchange gifts in celebration. They will love evil so much that Jesus and the good news of heaven and salvation will seem to them as torment. Jesus said in John 3:19-20, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." It is those who practice the truth who respond to the gospel invitation, and this proves that God has been at work in their hearts all along (John 3:21). However, those who do evil and love evil hate Jesus and His Light because it exposes them. Not only does it show them how corrupt and filthy they are in light of His holiness, but it reminds them that they deserve to be punished for their wickedness (John 16:8, Romans 1:32). Furthermore, there is a sense in which a defiled conscience (Titus 1:15), a deluded mind, and a deceived heart provide the sinner with an "enhanced" ability to enjoy corrupt behavior. They don't want the Light to make them see reality because then sin won't be as fun to them any longer. Darkness makes delusion easier.

Wicked people delight in their perversities (Isaiah 66:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:12), even though sin is dangerous, harmful, and leading to death. Proverbs 8:35-36 says, speaking of wisdom, "For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the Lord. *But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death*" (italics mine). **The delusion of the wicked is that they see death as life, and they willfully and continuously injure themselves with their sin.** The thief, who is Satan himself, comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but God gives life to the full in Christ (John 10:10). Yet the world thinks that sin is as good as it gets, and they hold it tightly even to their grave. It is an unreasonable conclusion and an irrational decision given that eternal life in Christ is way better than any passing pleasures of sin in this life (Hebrews 11:25). This life is so short, like a vapor that is here and then gone, yet the wicked put all of their eggs in the basket of the here and now and of enjoying the world system. Their spiritual

investment strategy is terrible (Matthew 19:30), yet they think it is worth defying God just to be able to sin now. The prospect of eternal bliss doesn't hold the weight that it should in their minds.

In Revelation 16, as God pours out the final seven bowl judgments, mankind still refuses to repent. Revelation 16:9 says, "Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory." Verse 11 says, "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds." The beast, whose mark they had taken and whose image they worshiped, will not be able to deliver them from the wrath of God, but still they will follow him and not the One Who alone could save them. It is a delusion of the highest order, but this was foretold in the Scripture. 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 says, "For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." The delusion Scripture speaks of is a result of sinners refusing to humble themselves and respond to the truth that they know in the creation, in their conscience, and in the Bible. Thus, God will give them over (Romans 1:24) according to their wicked desires to defile themselves and store up His just wrath. Proverbs 10:23 says, "Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, And so is wisdom to a man of understanding." **Whereas believers come to see sin as not just wrong in God's sight but harmful to themselves and others in addition to not providing the joy that practicing wisdom does, unbelievers who refuse to practice truth like the very thing that is killing them to the extent that they will follow Satan who is powerless to save them even as he is proven impotent before God.**

Jesus said in John 12:25, "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal." Jesus exposed the great delusion perfectly for any with ears to hear. He warned people that if they live exclusively for their own benefit and love themselves more than others that they would find themselves in a losing situation. This is because they will never find true satisfaction in this life by being selfish, and they will suffer eternally for failing to submit to and love Christ. It is only those who deny themselves, who sacrifice for others even at great cost, and who follow Christ who will enjoy the benefits of eternal life. Sinners, in choosing to love their lives, demonstrate that they actually hate themselves and will eternally suffer. Being deluded, they don't see this for what it is (Proverbs 26:11), but those who seek truth will find that there is a more excellent way.

Most hate the Light, but those who come to know the Light will be able to recognize that their love for darkness was a delusion of the devil. **Only in Christ can a person live delusion-free, for only in Christ are hidden all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).** Everywhere else, delusion reigns.