

HOW GOD SENDS STRONG DELUSION

Text: 2 Thess. 2:9-12

INTRO: This passage is recognized as a difficult one. Does God actually deceive people? Are there some folks that God does not want to learn the truth? How & under what circumstances does God send strong delusion?

At the outset I want to share with you a statement from Adam Clarke that has helped me in my study of this Bible subject: “There is a peculiarity of the Hebrew language which does not always distinguish between **permission** and **commandment**. Often the Scripture attributes to God what He only permits to be done; or what in the course of His providence He does not hinder.”

I. GOD’S DEALINGS WITH PHAROAH.

A. Pharaoh’s attitude.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go” (Ex. 5:2)

B. It was this attitude that caused Pharaoh’s heart to become hardened against the truth of God.

1. This hardness of heart is attributed to Pharaoh himself after the 2nd plague (frogs), EX 8:15
2. But later the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart is also attributed to God, EX 10:20.

C. Pharaoh’s part in hardening his own heart was an active part. He **chose** not to heed the will of God. God’s part was simply to **empower** Pharaoh to exercise that choice. This is evident from the fact that Pharaoh was held fully responsible for his hardness & punished for it.

II. GOD’S DEALINGS WITH KING AHAB.

A. Ahab’s attitude.

There was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up (1 Kings 21:25).

So the king of Israel said to Jehosaphat, “There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (1 Kings 8:22).

- B. Micaiah’s vision. READ I KINGS 22:19-23.
1. Note Micaiah is not relating a historical event, but a vision.
 2. Thus God did not in reality command that the false prophets lie to Ahab. He simply permitted them to do so, as they had already been doing.
 3. Micaiah’s vision simply related in figurative language how God would use Ahab’s own false prophets to bring about his downfall. The fact that Ahab was punished shows that Ahab himself was held responsible for rejecting the truth and believing the lie.

NOTE: God did not lie to Ahab nor did He put lies in the mouth of Ahab’s prophets. God simply made use in a providential way of those who were already lying to Ahab. The false prophets lied because they **chose** to lie & Ahab believed them because he **chose** to believe them.

III. PERHAPS THE CLEAREST EXAMPLE OF A CASE WHERE SOMETHING PERMITTED BY GOD IS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, IS THE PASSAGE FIRST FOUND IN ISAIAH 6:9-10.

- A. In Isa. 6:9-10, the hardness of heart on the part of Israel is attributed to the prophet himself. READ ISA 6:9-10.
- B. When Jesus quotes this passage in John 12:40, He seems to attribute the hardness of Israel’s hearts to God. READ JOHN 12:37-40
- C. Both Jesus & Paul, on other occasions, referred to the same prophecy & attributed the Jews’ hardness of

heart to the Jews themselves.

For the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing & their eyes **they have closed...**
(MT 13:15; Acts 28:27).

Putting these passages together it becomes evident that:

1. The prophet was to preach till they grew weary of his sermon--then keep on preaching.
2. God would not over-rule their stubborn wills, nor force them to believe His truth.
3. But the real culprits were the Jews themselves.
They hardened their own hearts, closed their own eyes, & shut their own ears because they were satisfied with the status quo.

IV. NOW, BACK TO OUR TEXT IN 2 THESS. 2:9-12.

- A. God does not lie. Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:13
- B. But God has made us in such a way that if we do not love the truth, we will come to believe what we want to believe. Eve in Eden is a good example.
 1. The atheist will examine the evidence & conclude that there is no God. Not because the evidence demands his conclusion, but because he is not willing to accept God & His will.
 2. The evolutionist examines the evidence & concludes that all forms of life have evolved from one common ancestor. He reaches that conclusion, not because the evidence is strong, but because he is not willing to believe otherwise.
 3. Many who walk by feelings & emotions in religious matters do so, not because the evidence demands such action, but because such is pleasing & satisfying to them

4. To these & many others, God “send strong delusion” -- No, He doesn’t lie to them. But neither does He tamper with their free will. He tells them the truth, but He allows them to weigh the evidence & decide for themselves what they will believe.

CONCLUSION:

- A. God told Pharoah the truth, but allowed him to believe his lying magicians instead.
- B. God told Ahab the truth, but He did not force Ahab to believe it.
- C. God told the Jews of Jesus’ day the truth, but they were free to reject the truth--and most of them did.
- D. God, in His word, tells us the truth. He does not actively deceive any man, woman or child--but any person who does not love God’s truth will find a way to believe what he wants to believe. And God will allow him to do so. Brethren, we **must** learn to love God’s truth, lest we believe a lie and be condemned.

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