



"Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all."
—Oliver Wendell Holmes

17-Aug-18

Strangers to the Truth (Part Three)

As Part Two concluded, we began to look into the apostle Paul's prophetic warning in [II Thessalonians 2:1-4](#) about the deceptions of the Man of [Sin](#):

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord [Jesus Christ](#) and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the [falling away](#) comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called [God](#) or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

When the Man of Sin appears on the scene, we must be careful about what we see and hear so we are not deceived. This "lawless one" will arrive on the scene "with all power, signs, and lying wonders" (verse 9), and by those signs, he will deceive the whole world ([Revelation 13:14](#)).

Paul continues in [II Thessalonians 2:10](#), "[He will come] with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the [love](#) of

the truth, that they might be saved." The apostle reveals the dividing line between the saved and the unsaved, the undeceived and the deceived: Those who do not have the "love of the truth" will die. In [Revelation 13:8](#), it is put another way: Those who will be deceived and die are those not written in the Book of Life.

The apostle's next words in [II Thessalonians 2:11](#) have made students of the Bible pause and consider for centuries: "And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie." What lie is this? A possible answer appears in verse 4: The big lie is that the Man of Sin will present himself as God! People will have become so conditioned to lying and being lied to that, when this sinful man comes onto [the world](#) stage, declares himself to be God, and performs powerful "signs and lying wonders," most of humanity will believe him.

So why does God send strong delusion to these people? Paul provides an immediate answer in verse 12: "that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." God gives these people over to their already-debased minds (see [Romans 1:28](#)), letting them believe what they will and die in their sin and rebellion.

Paul tells us how to combat this deception in [II Thessalonians 2:15](#): "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle." It takes a lot of effort to stand fast and not waver in our beliefs. It can feel as if we are holding on to a rock in the middle of a raging river of lies. Many of us have seen a lot of friends and family let go of that proverbial rock over the years and drift away (see [Hebrews 2:1](#)). But we must cling to it for all we are worth!

The prophet Jeremiah laments over the state of God's people in the book bearing his name. At the time of this prophecy, Israel has already been taken into captivity, and Jeremiah is warning Judah to [repent](#) so she can avoid Israel's fate. His is a dual prophecy in that God is warning us as well: "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit [adultery](#), swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know . . .?" ([Jeremiah 7:8-9](#)).

Notice that God mentions lying first, then the other sins follow. Why? The people believed lies, which led to justifying the other sins. The lies were the opening [Satan](#) used as a wedge to lead to other, more serious sins.

Jeremiah quotes God as saying in verse 28: "So you shall say to them, 'This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.'" These words perfectly describe this nation today! The daily drumbeat seems to be that there are no sins, only life choices. The only sin that today's society seems to recognize is believing in the Bible!

God continues the theme in [Jeremiah 9:3-5](#):

"And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me," says the LORD. "Everyone take heed to his neighbor [margin, *friend*] and do not trust any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers. Everyone will deceive his neighbor and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity."

They are exhausted from committing so much sin! A few verses later is another apt description of us today: "'Their tongue is an arrow shot out; it speaks deceit; one speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he lies in wait. Shall I not punish them for these things?' says the LORD. 'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?'" (verses 8-9).

The time approaches when all this lying will come to a head. Not too long in the future, it will be hard to believe a word anyone says, even the words of our neighbors, friends, and those still closer. It is at that time when the Man of Sin will step into this moral vacuum and convince many that he is a god! And it all starts with lying—by us, by others, at the instigation of Satan!

[Jeremiah 9:12](#) reads: "Who is the wise man who may understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it?"

Is God not speaking to us? Are we listening?

- Mike Ford

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Beast From the Earth and 666](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Both beasts of Revelation 13 appear to be end-time entities (having a brief but horrifying 3 1/2-year tenure), serving as counterfeits of the Two Witnesses. Both beasts derive their power from Satan the Devil. The first beast rises out of volatile, ever-changing political turmoil, while the second rises out of an entrenched, worldwide religious system, totally opposed to God's laws. The second beast will be able to perform lying wonders, have capital authority over the lives of "heretics," and cause an identifying "mark" on the forehead (representing thoughts or attitudes) and right hand (representing physical activities) of those who voluntarily take it. The number 666 seems to represent the number of ultimate human "perfection" (humanism) apart from God—as opposed to the number of ultimate godly perfection.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[What Is a False Prophet?](#)

by David C. Grabbe

The Bible warns us that a great False Prophet will soon arise to sway mankind into idolatry. In addition, numerous passages speak of other false prophets and false teachers in the church and in the world. David Grabbe, in exposing the differences between false prophets and true ones, explains what we need to look out for as the end nears.

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