

Strong Delusion To Believe A Lie

— 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 —

- The Root of Delusion — Refusing the Love of the Truth
- The Pattern of Judgment — God Gives Men Over to Blindness
- The Power of the Lie — How Error Becomes Believable
- The Path of Safety — How to Remain Grounded in the Truth

There are warnings in Scripture, that should make every sober-minded hearer, stop and examine themselves. One of those warnings is found in [2 Thessalonians 2:10–12](#).

In that passage, Paul does not merely speak of error, confusion, or ignorance.

He speaks of something far more serious:

A condition in which people become so opposed to truth, that God allows them to believe a lie.

Notice the passage:

- “with all **deceivableness** of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they **received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved.
¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them **strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:**
¹² that they all might be damned **who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**
([2Thess.2:10-12](#))

That is a frightening thought. Not because God is unjust, but because it reveals how dangerous it is, to resist God’s Word.

The passage teaches, that this condition, does not begin with God forcing innocent people into error.

It begins with men, refusing what God has graciously provided — They “**received not the love of the truth.**”

They did not merely fail to understand it — They did Not love it — They did Not welcome it — They did Not hold to it.

And so, this lesson asks a very practical question:

- In what ways can a person receive a strong delusion from God, to the extent that one believes a lie?
- Just as importantly, what warnings and applications should we draw from this text, for our own hearts?

As we walk through this lesson, we will see four great truths:

- Delusion begins when truth is refused.
- God’s judgments, often involve giving men over, to the blindness they choose.
- A lie becomes believable, when the heart prefers sin over righteousness.
- And safety is found in loving, receiving, and continuing in the truth of God.

Before we can understand the strong delusion itself, we must first understand where it begins.

I. The Root of Delusion — Refusing the Love of the Truth

Paul does not leave the cause uncertain. He tells us plainly, that these people perish

- because they “**received not the love of the truth.**”
- Delusion begins, not with lack of access to truth, but with rejection of truth.

To see this clearly, let’s first notice that the problem is not simply what men know, but what they love.

A. The Heart Problem: Not Receiving the Love of the Truth

Paul identifies the root cause of spiritual ruin.

These people were exposed to truth, but they did not receive it with love.

- He said, “And with all **deceivableness** of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they **received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved.” ([2Thess.2:10](#))

Explanation:

- “**Deceivableness**” means — that which misleads, cheats, or leads astray.
- “**Received not**” means — they refused it; they did not welcome it.
- “**Love of the truth**” means — not mere awareness of truth, but a heart that values, embraces, and submits to it.
- Paul does Not say, they lacked intelligence — He says they lacked love for truth.

Jesus explained, that truth brings freedom, only to those who continue in it.

- He said, “...to those Jews which believed on Him, IF ye **continue** in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” ([Jn.8:31–32](#))

Explanation:

- “**Continue**” means — remain, stay, abide.
- Truth is not helping a person, who hears it one day, and abandons it the next.
- Freedom belongs to the one, who remains IN the Lord’s word.

Jesus also showed that, some reject light, because it exposes what they do.

- He said, “And this is the condemnation, that **light** is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be **reproved**.” ([Jn.3:19–20](#))

Explanation:

- “**Light**” means — truth from God.
- “**Reproved**” means — exposed, corrected, brought to light.
- Some do not reject truth because it is unclear, but because it is too clear.

A man may claim he wants directions, but if he throws away the map, every time it points him where he does not want to go, his problem is not confusion — His problem is rebellion.

In the same way, the heart that does not love truth, will eventually prefer any lie, that allows it to stay comfortable.

And once truth is resisted, the heart does not remain unchanged.

B. Repeated Resistance Hardens the Heart

Scripture warns that sin deceives, and repeated yielding to it, hardens the heart.

- The Bible says, “**Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin.**” ([Heb.3:12–13](#))

Explanation:

- “**Evil heart of unbelief**” means — a heart unwilling to trust and obey God.
- “**Hardened**” means — made stubborn, resistant, unresponsive.
- Sin does not merely stain; it hardens.

Paul described what happens, when a conscience is repeatedly violated.

- He said, “**Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared, with a hot iron.**” ([1Tim.4:1–2](#))

Explanation:

- “**Giving heed**” means — paying attention to, listening to.
- “**Seared**” means — burned over, made insensitive.
- A conscience can become less responsive, the more it is ignored.

The wise man warns of the danger, of repeated refusal of correction.

- “He, that being often reprov'd, **hardeneth his neck,** shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” ([Prov.29:1](#))

Explanation:

- “**Hardeneth his neck**” means — stubbornly refuses correction.
- Persistent rejection is NOT harmless — It leads somewhere.

Think of a callus on the hand — It forms by repeated pressure — Over time, the skin loses sensitivity. So it is with the heart — Every refusal of truth, makes the next refusal easier.

Now let's see, that this refusal of truth, is not only a New Testament warning; The same principle appears, throughout the Scriptures.

C. Refusing God's Word, Has Always Led to Blindness

Pharaoh is one of the clearest Old Testament examples. Again and again, he resisted the word of God.

- The Bible says, “when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he **hardened his heart,** and **hearkened not** unto them; as the LORD had said.” ([Exodus 8:15](#))

Explanation:

- “**Hardened his heart**” means — made himself stubborn.
- “**Hearkened not**” means — refused to listen.
- Pharaoh was not lacking evidence — He was resisting it.

Later, Scripture also says the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. Both are true: Pharaoh hardened himself, and God confirmed him in judgment.

- The Bible says, “And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.” ([Exodus 9:12](#))

Explanation:

- This is judicial hardening.
- God gave Pharaoh over in judgment, after Pharaoh had repeatedly resisted God's word.

Isaiah was told that many would hear the message, but remain spiritually dull.

- God instructed, “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their **ears heavy,** and **shut their eyes...**” ([Isa.6:9–10](#); see also [1Kngs.22:19–23](#))

Explanation:

- “**Ears heavy**” means — dull, unwilling to hear.
- “**Shut their eyes**” means — spiritually unresponsive.
- This does not picture innocent people being mistreated. It pictures a people so resistant, that judgment takes the form of continued blindness.

The root of delusion is not weakness of intellect, but refusal of truth. Men do not suddenly fall into strong delusion without a cause.

The process begins:

- when they do not receive the love of the truth,
- when they resist correction,
- and when their hearts become hardened through sin.

Once that root is established, the next question is this: what does God do with those who stubbornly resist Him?

II. The Pattern of Judgment — God Gives Men Over to Blindness

The strong delusion of [2 Thessalonians Chapter 2](#), fits a broader biblical pattern.

God's judgments often involve, giving men over to the path they have chosen (Compare [Hos.4:17](#)).

Let's first notice this pattern, in straightforward language from the New Testament.

A. God Gives Men Over, When They Reject Him

Romans 1 shows what happens, when men knowingly reject God and exchange truth for error.

- Paul wrote, "Wherefore God also **gave them up** to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts... **who changed the truth of God into a lie**, and worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator..." ([Rom.1:24-25](#))

Explanation:

- "Gave them up" means — handed them over, allowed them to go their chosen way.
- "Changed the truth of God into a lie" means — exchanged divine truth for falsehood.
- This is not God approving sin — It is God judging men, by letting them have what they insist on.

Three verses later, Paul continues stating,

- "And even as they **did not like to retain** God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a **reprobate mind**..." ([Rom.1:28](#))

Explanation:

- "Did not like to retain" means — refused to keep.
- "Reprobate mind" means — a mind that fails the test; morally and spiritually unsound.
- When men refuse God in the mind, the mind itself becomes corrupted.

If a man insists on sailing away from the lighthouse, the judgment may be, that he is allowed to continue until the rocks prove, what he refused to see or believe.

That same pattern helps us understand the "strong delusion" of [2 Thessalonians Chapter 2](#).

B. The Strong Delusion Comes After Truth Is Rejected

Now we return to the text of the lesson, from Paul's inspired words, which again reads,

- "And **for this cause** God shall send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who **believed not the truth**, but had **pleasure in unrighteousness**." ([2Thess.2:11-12](#); see also [Ezek.14:3-9](#))

Explanation:

- "For this cause" means — because of what came before.
- "Strong delusion" means — powerful deception, effective error.
- "Believed not the truth" means — refused faith in what God revealed.
- "Pleasure in unrighteousness" means — delight in sin.
- The delusion is judicial — It comes "for this cause," not without cause.

The passage itself, gives the moral reason for the judgment.

- "Because they received **Not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved." ([2Thess.2:10](#))

Explanation:

- God's saving truth was available, but they did not receive it — This makes the judgment righteous.

Even in the Old Testament, God warned that falsehood, would expose hearts that would not love Him.

- “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams... saying, Let us go after other gods... thou shalt not hearken... for the LORD your God **proveth you**, to know whether ye love the LORD your God, with all your heart...” ([Deut.13:1–3](#))

Explanation:

- “Proveth you” means — tests you.
- False teaching, reveals whether the heart truly loves God.

A counterfeit bill exposes the careless eye — False doctrine exposes the careless heart.

Error has a way of revealing, who really loves the Lord, and who only wants religion on their own terms.

This pattern of judicial blindness, is seen again in the days of Christ.

C. Those Who Refuse Light, Are Left in Darkness

John explains why many in Israel did not believe, even after seeing the works of Christ.

- He said, “But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet, might be fulfilled... He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart...” ([Jn.12:37–40](#))

Explanation:

- The language reflects judicial blindness.
- After repeated refusal, God’s judgment leaves them in the darkness they chose.

Jesus taught the same principle in simpler terms.

- He said, “For this people’s heart is **waxed gross**, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes **they have closed**...” ([Matt.13:14–15](#))

Explanation:

- “Waxed gross” means — become dull, thick, insensitive (“dull of hearing”).
- “They have closed” means — they themselves shut their eyes.
- Again, men first close their own eyes, and then judgment follows.

There is a difference between not seeing and refusing to see. The first may be weakness — The second becomes guilt.

God’s judgment often takes the form of giving men over. Pharaoh, Israel, the Gentile world in [Romans 1](#), and the unbelieving in [2Thessalonians 2](#), all show the same pattern:

- When men refuse God’s truth, God may confirm them in the blindness they have chosen.

But this raises another very sobering concern:

III. The Power of the Lie — How Error Becomes Believable

Lies gain power, when the heart is prepared to receive them.

Falsehood becomes attractive, when it serves pride, lust, fear, convenience, or self-will.

Let’s now consider the simple fact, that many lies are welcomed, because...

A. A Lie Is Easy to Believe, When It Protects Sin

Paul says these people had “pleasure in unrighteousness.”

- “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had **pleasure in unrighteousness**.” ([2Thess.2:12](#))

Explanation:

- “Pleasure” means — delight, satisfaction.
- “Unrighteousness” means — that which is contrary to God’s standard.
- A lie becomes attractive, when it permits what truth condemns.

Isaiah warned of a people who reversed moral categories.

- He said, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
“ Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” ([Isa.5:20-21](#))

Explanation:

- Delusion is deep, when a man no longer merely does evil, but relabels it as good.

Some in Jeremiah’s day, wanted a message that would not trouble them.

- The Bible says, “The prophets prophesy falsely... and my people love to have it so...” ([Jer.5:31](#))

Explanation:

- This is a searching statement.
- False teachers were guilty, but the people were guilty too, because they loved the falsehood.

The heart often chooses a lie, the way a thief chooses darkness.

It is not because darkness is better than light, but because darkness hides, what one wants to keep doing.

And when people want soothing words more than sound doctrine, they become easy prey for error.

B. Men Often Believe Lies, They Want to Hear

Paul warned that some will not endure sound doctrine.

- “For the time will come, when they will not endure **sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having **itching ears**; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto **fables**.” ([2Tim.4:3-4](#); [2Pet.2:1-3](#))

Explanation:

- “**Sound doctrine**” means — healthy teaching.
- “**Itching ears**” means — wanting to hear what pleases, rather than what is true.
- “**Fables**” means — myths, stories, false narratives.
- The lie gains strength, when hearers start shopping for teachers, who will support their desires.

The prophet described, those who wanted smooth words.

- He said, “this is a rebellious people... Which say to the seers, See Not; and to the prophets, Prophecy Not unto us right things, speak unto us **smooth things**...” ([Isa.30:9-10](#))

Explanation:

- “**Smooth things**” means — pleasing words, easy messages, untroubling speech.
- People under delusion, often do not want less religion — They want religion without rebuke.

The Lord condemned worship, that replaced His word with human teaching.

- He said, “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth... but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” ([Matt.15:8-9](#))

Explanation:

A lie becomes believable, when man’s ideas are treated as if, they were God’s word.

A doctor who changes the diagnosis, to please the patient is not merciful — He is dangerous.

So are teachers who soothe souls, while hiding the truth, that could save them.

There are also, very practical, memorable ways, that this warning applies to daily life.

C. Real-Life Applications, of the Strong Delusion

The Scriptures command self-examination, because deception can be personal.

- **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”** ([2Cor.13:5](#))

Explanation:

- **“Examine yourselves”** means — test yourself honestly (with the standard of God’s Word).
- Delusion is not only “out there” — It can begin in each of us, IF we stop testing ourselves by Scripture.

James warns against hearing, without doing.

- He said, **“But be ye doers of the word, and Not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”** ([Jas.1:22](#))

Explanation:

- A man may deceive himself without inventing a new doctrine at all.
- He may simply hear the truth and fail to obey it.

The Proverbs warn, against trusting our own judgment, above God’s wisdom.

- **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”** ([Prov.14:12](#))

Explanation:

- What **“seems right”** is not always right — Feelings are not a safe guide.

A man can receive a strong delusion,

- when he says, “I know what the Bible says, BUT...”

A person can begin believing a lie,

- when he chooses family tradition over plain Scripture.

One may drift into delusion,

- when emotion becomes the test of truth, instead of the word of God.

A hearer may begin believing a lie,

- when he only listens to sermons or teachers, that never challenge him.

Someone may deceive himself,

- by calling partial obedience “faithfulness.”

One may believe a lie,

- when he assumes sincerity is enough, even though God requires truth.

A Christian may start down this path,

- when he stops loving spiritual correction.

These are not small matters — Delusion often begins in ordinary habits of resisting truth.

The lie becomes believable, when it serves sin — flatters the hearer — avoids correction, or appeals to human wisdom, instead of divine revelation.

We must not only ask, “Is that teacher false?”, but also, “Is my own heart wanting something other than truth?”

After such a serious warning, it is a comfort to know, that Scripture also shows,

IV. The Path of Safety — How to Remain Grounded in the Truth

Paul does not leave faithful believers in fear — He points them to the remedy:

- Sanctification — Belief of the truth — Steadfastness — and Love for what God has spoken.

Let's begin where safety always begins:

A. Receive the Word with Humility and Readiness

James shows the spirit, with which the word must be received.

- He said, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with **meekness**, the **engrafted word**, which is able to save your souls.” ([Jas.1:21](#))

Explanation:

- “**Meekness**” means — humble teachability.
- “**Engrafted word**” means — the implanted word of God.
- A proud heart is vulnerable to delusion — A meek heart is teachable.

The Bereans provide a noble example, of how truth should be received.

- The Bible says, “These were more noble... in that they received the word, with all **readiness of mind**, and **searched the scriptures** daily, whether those things were so.” ([Acts 17:11](#))

Explanation:

- “**Readiness of mind**” means — eagerness to hear.
- “**Searched the scriptures**” means — tested teaching, by God's word.
- Safety lies in hearing gladly and testing carefully.

The psalmist shows, the heart that treasures truth.

- He said, “O how **LOVE** I Thy law! it is my **Meditation** all the day.” ([Psa.119:97](#))

Explanation:

- Love for the truth, is not occasional interest — It is a settled affection.

A tree with deep roots, is not easily blown over.

In the same way, the soul that loves and searches the word, is not easily swept away, by every new error.

But receiving truth is not enough, unless we also continue in it.

B. Stand Fast in the Truth, Once You Have Learned It

Paul's immediate counsel to the Thessalonians, is to stand firm.

- He said, “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord... Therefore, brethren, **stand fast**, and **hold the traditions** which ye have been taught...” ([2Thess.2:13–15](#))

Explanation:

- “**Stand fast**” means — remain firm, do not move away.
- “**Hold**” means — keep a firm grip on.
- “**Traditions**” here, means — apostolic teaching handed down by inspiration, not human customs.
- The answer to strong delusion, is strong steadfastness.

Jesus connected true discipleship, with abiding in His word.

- He said, “IF ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed.” ([Jn.8:31](#))

Explanation:

- Continuance PROVES discipleship.

Paul warns against spiritual instability.

- He said, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...” ([Eph.4:14](#))

Explanation:

- Spiritual immaturity is easily moved — Mature believers must be grounded.

A ship that is Not Anchored, may Drift without noticing it.

Likewise, a soul that is Not firmly Anchored in Scripture, may Drift into error slowly, quietly, and **FATALLY**.

Finally, we must remember, that protection from delusion, is not merely intellectual — It is moral and spiritual.

C. Love Righteousness, Not Just Right Ideas

The contrast in [2 Thessalonians](#) is striking:

Some had pleasure in unrighteousness — but the saved are sanctified through the truth.

- The Bible says, “God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through **sanctification** of the Spirit and **belief of the truth**.” ([2Thess.2:13](#))

Explanation:

- “**Sanctification**” means — being set apart unto God.
- “**Belief of the truth**” means — trusting and submitting, to what God has revealed.
- Truth is not just to be discussed — It is to sanctify.

Jesus prayed that His disciples would be sanctified through truth.

- He said, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word IS truth.” ([Jn.17:17](#))

Explanation:

- The word of God is not just informative; it is transformative.

The psalmist again shows, the moral shape of a truth-loving life.

- “Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.” ([Psa.119:104](#))

Explanation:

- To love truth is to hate falsehood, and every path opposed to God.

A man is safest from lies, when his heart, truly wants to be holy.

The more a person loves righteousness, the less appealing lies become.

The path of safety is plain:

- Receive the Word humbly — search the Scriptures carefully — stand fast in God’s Truth — and love Righteousness.

The surest protection from believing a lie — is to love the truth — enough to obey it.

Having considered both the warning and the remedy, let's now gather the lesson into a few,

V. Final Thoughts

[2Thess.2:10-13](#), teaches one of the most sobering truths in all the Bible. Men can reach a point where, because they refuse the love of the truth, God allows them to be given over, to the delusion they have chosen.

This does not happen randomly — and it does not happen unjustly.

- It begins when truth is resisted — correction is refused — sin is loved and embraced,
- and lies are welcomed, because they serve the desires of the heart.

Safety is found in a meek — Scripture searching — obedient, truth-loving heart.

Let us therefore ask ourselves:

- Do I love truth, even when it corrects me?
- Do I search the Scriptures, or do I just assume I am right?
- Do I want the truth, or only the version of truth, that does not trouble me?
- Am I standing fast, or am I slowly drifting?

It is the Lord, Who invites all to —

- Desire to **Hear** the gospel ([Rom.10:17](#)),
- **Believe** in Christ ([Heb.11:6](#); [Jn.8:24](#)),
- **Repent** of sins ([Lk.13:3](#); [Acts 17:30](#)),
- **Confess** your belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ([Acts 8:37](#); [Rom.10:9-10](#)),
- and **be baptized** for the forgiveness of sins ([Acts 22:16](#); [Mk.16:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [1Pet.3:21](#); [Gal.3:26-27](#)).

A lie is never harmless — And Biblical truth is never optional.

So then, let us NOT resist the truth — let us RECEIVE it, OBEY it, and be SAVED by it.