

Understanding the Delusion of the Last Days

6.16.19

2 Timothy 3:1-4 NASB But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ²For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

I. Three profound facts about the latter days

A. The times will be difficult (verse 1).

1. What does “Last Days” mean?
 - a) New Covenant
 - b) End of the Age
 - c) The Return of Christ Jesus

B. A Person’s Good Character will be marginalized (verses 2-5).

1. Life will be centered on self-interests.
2. “What can you do for me” or “give me?”
3. The struggle of two natures: flesh vs. spirit.
 - a) **Romans 7:14-25 NLT** “So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. ¹⁵I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate. ¹⁶But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. ¹⁸And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. ¹⁹I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²²I love God’s law with all my heart. ²³But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

4. The works of the flesh instead of the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-26 ¹⁶ “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

C. Many will have a form of Godliness, but it will be powerless (verse 5).

1. Powerless to produce salvation
2. Powerless to change lives
3. The Gospel of Christ is the “power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16 - “the power of God at work”).
4. The goal of Babylon appears to be world domination.
 - a) One ruler (government)
 - a) One economy (currency)
 - b) One religion

II. There will be a world-wide delusion.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Phillips Translation ¹⁻⁴Now we do implore you, by the very certainty of Christ’s coming and of our meeting him together, to keep your heads and not be thrown off balance by any prediction or message or letter purporting to come from us, and saying that the day of Christ is almost here. Don’t let anyone deceive you by any means whatsoever. That day will not come before there arises a definite rejection of God and the appearance of the lawless man. He is the product of all that leads to death, and he sets himself up in opposition to every religion. He himself takes his seat in the temple of God, to

show that he really claims to be God. ⁵⁻¹²I expect you remember now how I talked about this when I was with you. You will probably also remember how I used to talk about a “restraining power” which would operate until the time should come for the emergence of this man. Evil is already insidiously at work but its activities are restricted until what I have called the “restraining power” (of God) is removed. When that happens the lawless man will be plainly seen—though the truth of the Lord Jesus spells his doom, and the radiance of the coming of the Lord Jesus will be his utter destruction. The lawless man is produced by the spirit of evil and armed with all the force, wonders and signs that falsehood can devise. To those involved in this dying world he will come with evil’s undiluted power to deceive, for they have refused to love the truth which could have saved them. God sends upon them, therefore, the full force of evil’s delusion, so that they put their faith in an utter fraud and meet the inevitable judgment of all who have refused to believe the truth and who have made evil their play-fellow.

A. Why? Because mankind rejected the truth.

B. The “Great Falling Away” implies a defection or abandonment:

1. From the truth
2. Probably in numbers
3. The Remnant
4. The Harvest

C. Delusion about God’s view of sin - Romans 1:25-26 NASB For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

1. The lies of the serpent:
 - a) God is not good. He wants to keep the best for Himself.
 - b) God’s motives are not to be trusted.
 - c) Judgment is an empty threat. There is no justice in the world.

D. Delusion about the Return of Christ - 2 Peter 3:3-4 NASB Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

E. Delusion about The Gospel - John 16:7-11 NASB But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. ⁸And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; ⁹concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; ¹¹and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

1. The truth about sin
2. The truth about righteousness
3. The truth about judgment

III. There will be flawed thinking.

- A. “I have plenty of time.”**
- B. “The world is ok.”**
- C. “I’ve heard all this before.”**

THE WARNING OF 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12 NASB

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

So then, how should we live?

1. Live in tune with the Spirit.

2. Live in the community of faith.

3. Stop filling your mind with the world's perspective.

4. Recommit to a Scriptural world-view.
 - A. I will not only study the Bible, I will believe it.

 - B. I will not only pray, I will listen.

 - C. I will live for the Spirit, not for the flesh.