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Permit #361

Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

Activity of Satan

Satan is, in his rebellion against God, taking advantage of every fleshly lust and every weakness in the world and in Christians themselves. As one who disguises himself as an angel of light, he engages in spiritual fraud and deception on a massive scale, working — if possible — to deceive even the elect. His demonic assistants developed the doctrines that resulted in the *apostasy* and eventual formation of the Roman Catholic Church. The apostle Paul, in his writings to the church at Thessalonica and his protégé Timothy, warned the early Christians about the coming major falling away from the original faith. But few listened. Step by step the Catholic Church developed into its own organization, with the western half eventually accepting a *universal bishop*, or Pope. This, then was the *man of lawlessness* Paul also said was coming and would be revealed when “what restrains him” was taken out of the way. The end of the Emperorship in Rome paved the way for the development of this papal power, and the iron fist of the papacy was “revealed, whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth by the appearance of His coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Roman Catholicism, and her sister from the time of the “great schism,” — the “Orthodox” belief system — will endure until Jesus comes again.

- ▲ **In accord with Satan** — The apostle Paul repeatedly warned his readers and his hearers about the major threat that would be posed by this *man of lawlessness* and accompanying deception. “Do you not remember,” he had stated, “that while I was with you, I was telling you these things?” (2

Thessalonians 2:5). It was subtle, making one change at a time; and it was gradual, taking hundreds of years fully to implement. Because of its subtlety and gradualism, most did not recognize what was happening, and what once was the church of the New Testament was transformed into something else. The “coming,” or appearing, of the man of lawlessness, predicts Paul, “is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Catholicism has been built on the claims of all kinds of miracles and visions. To be “elevated to sainthood” in the Roman Catholic Church, for example, two “miracles” must have been performed by the candidate considered for “canonization.” There is a definite dark “power” working through the Catholic Church, crushing the souls of millions and oppressing the truth wherever possible. Any of the “exorcisms” performed and publicized by priests and the Catholic Church are “false wonders,” and designed to lead people away from the truth of the scripture.

▲ **Deception of wickedness** — The apostle Paul warned Timothy, saying that this apostasy would develop through those who would be “paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars” (1 Timothy 4:2,3). On May 13, 1917, an apparition of “the Blessed Virgin Mary,” brighter than the sun, appeared to three children near Fatima, Portugal, with revelations that were incorporated into the Catholic belief system and Catholic missals. This is typical of the continuing development of Catholic doctrine, coming, as Paul and the Holy Spirit predicted, “with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Many millions believe in these types of deception, and on a scale so large that the deceptions of the founder of the Mormons — Joseph Smith, Jr. — or one of the modern so-called Pentecostal movement “prophets” pale into insignificance in comparison.

“God is not a god of confusion,” averred Paul, but there is someone who is — Satan — the one who deceives the Gentile peoples of this world (1 Corinthians 14:33). One of his goals is clearly to create so much confusion that most people simply give up in trying to find the truth. But the truth that God created the material realm is evident to all who will examine the creation, so that mankind is without excuse. And the truth that will set man free is found in the sacred scriptures, whose truths can be unpackaged and examined by those who will seek and find.

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