



Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

Lovers of Truth

Jesus guarantees that all who are truth-seekers will be saved. And He further guarantees that all who are not lovers of truth will die the eternal death. "This is the judgment," was the way Jesus described it, "that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Some speak of "all the good people" they have known, and think that all these are going to heaven because they are these good people. But here is the divine analysis: "There is none righteous ... there is none who does good" (Romans 3:10-12). Hence the only solution for such a one is to come to Jesus — the light — on His terms. "For everyone who does evil," stated the Lord, regarding those who would depend upon their own righteousness, or who just would not care, "hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20). But there are those who are seeking for truth, who, as Jesus put it, "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). "But he who practices the truth comes to the light," is the unchallengeable statement of the Lord, "that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21). Those who are truth-seekers, who desire to practice the truth, *will come to the light*. This is the Lord's guarantee.

- **Deception of wickedness** — Paul had prophesied the coming of *the apostasy*, the massive falling away from the original faith of Christ. This eventually evidenced itself in the formation of the Catholic Church, with the particular manifestation of the papacy of the Catholic Church based in Rome. This was the "one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness." This deception worked because it was gradual, and because those who thought they were followers of Christ (in a general sense) did not have access to the sacred writ. Hence the incremental changes over time produced a monster that was totally different than the original church of Christ. This deception was allowed to work to separate out "those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

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- **Deluding influence** — God has continuing judgment, sifting the hearts of men and separating out those who are true from those who are not. "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God," was Peter's comment, contemporaneous with Paul, "and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God" (1 Peter 4:17). The Father particularly allows things to work inside the church for continual refining, for fine-tuning the separation of the wheat from the chaff. "And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence," is Paul's phraseology, "so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:11,12). There are only two categories of men: those who believe the truth, and those who take pleasure in wickedness. So God allows various kinds of false doctrines, persecutions, faction-generators, etc., to work inside the body of Christ to extract all those who really are not followers of truth.

As Paul spoke to the elders of Ephesus: "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29,30). That was how it was then, and that is how it is now. Those who have the love of the truth will be able to sort it out; those who really are not lovers of truth will get side-tracked into false teaching and turn away from the Lord.

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