

No. 21, Satanic Miracles (2)

It has come to our attention in various Scriptures that Satan and the forces of darkness are able to work miracles. In essence, Satan presents the counterfeit miracle as he does in other issues as well. He presents the counterfeit Gospel, the counterfeit Jesus and the counterfeit spirit. Likewise he has the power to present the counterfeit miracle. A counterfeit is passed off as the real thing, and this is certainly true of what the enemy does in the spiritual realm. He is able to transform himself into the angel of light, 2 Cor 11: 14. The word “angel” also means messenger. A messenger of light is a description of the ability to cause unsuspecting souls to imagine that what they are receiving is truth, is of God. Thus, Paul warns us that Satan is able to present himself and his deceits as real & genuine truth.

We also noted the warning uttered in a number of N.T. Scriptures that prior to Christ’s return there will be a proliferation of satanic miracles, Matt 24: 24, Mark 13: 20-22. Another passage that gives warning of such activity is this portion, 2 Thessalonians 2. Note v.v. 9-12 in which Paul refers to “*the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*” Here is language similar to that which Christ uses in the Gospels. There are various points to note in this passage about the deceptive working of Satan.

I. NOTICE THAT SATAN’S DECEPTIVE STRATEGY IS DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE EYE

In v.9 Paul speaks of the coming or the appearance of the man of sin, he who will emerge prior to Christ’s second coming. But note that the emergence of antichrist will be *after the working of Satan*. The word “after” means *according to – according to the working of Satan*. The word *working* gives us the English word *energy*. It is a word that denotes the power that effects the desired result. Moreover, this satanic energy that will accompany the emergence of the man of sin will give birth to counterfeit miracles – *power and signs and lying wonders*.

See 2 Cor 12: 12 – similar language with respect to the ministry of Paul and his colleagues, genuine apostles. Indeed the same three Greek words are used here as are found in 2 Thess 2: 9. The term *mighty deeds* in 2 Cor 12: 12 is the translation of the same Greek word as is translated *power* 2 Thess 2: 9. It is essential to understand the sense of these three words.

Power – the energy used to effect the miracle

Sign – the actual miracle along with the message conveyed by it. As we have noted a miracle is a sign that verifies a message.

Wonder – really refers to the effect wrought on those who witness the miracle, Acts 3: 9-11. They saw what had happened, and they were filled with wonder. In other words, the miracle wrought on the lame man appealed to the eye and drew their attention. Peter was then in a position to bring them the word.

But here in 2 Thess 2 the with reference to the word *wonder* note that it is accompanied by the additional word *lying*. The word for “lying” is *pseudos* from which we derive the English word *pseudo* – denoting that which is not the genuine thing. Therefore, Paul reveals in 2 Thess 2 that the emergence of the man of sin will be given credibility by satanic activity of the nature described here. Satan’s strategy will be that of appealing to the eye in order to gain acceptance for the man of sin.

1. Remember that man has an inherent desire to see what he worships.

This is due to the naturally idolatrous being of man. See Rom 1: 25 – in this whole passage Paul describes the fallen nature of man and shows that it is inherently idolatrous, which means that he wishes to see what he worships. For this reason false religion flourishes.

2. Moreover, the constant desire of unbelieving man is for some visible sign.

See Matt 12: 38; Luke 11: 14-16 – in this instance the Lord had just given a sign, but the people were not content. Man is never content and is always looking for some new experience. But such a desire is an evidence of unbelief and a fallen nature. See Luke 16: 27-31 – note here that this damned soul rejected the word and still retained the desire for the visible sign, proving that such is inherent within human nature.

3. Thus, the last great deception of Satan in the person of the antichrist will succeed for a time because of the lying wonder. See Rev 13: 3 – “*all the world wondered after the beast.*” Cf. Rev 17: 6-8.

II. NOTICE ALSO THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF SATANIC DECEPTION IS A FORM OF JUDGMENT

See v.v. 10-12 – these verses vividly describe those who follow Satan’s methods. Note some features that mark that generation that will receive the man of sin.

1. Note their depravity

V.12b, “*had pleasure in unrighteousness.*” The verb “had pleasure” means *delighted*. It is a word that relates to the mind and the evil contentment & delight that the depraved mind takes in unrighteousness or in the vicious, wicked lifestyle. Thus, they are a generation notoriously & blatantly wicked and who take delight in the programme of the man of sin.

2. Note their delusion

V.11. That generation reject the truth, v.10; they do not believe the truth, v.12. Therefore God will give them over to delusion so that they will believe the lie; they will accept the lying wonders that will surround the man of sin. Compare John 12: 37-40 – God gives men up to judicial blindness, a form of judgment for the rejection of the truth that has already taken place.

3. Note their damnation – v.12, “*that they all might be damned.*” Here is their final condemnation – eternal damned following on from their judicial blindness.