

against the Kurds of Iraq and Iran, for instance, might have a very destabilising impact on the region. Russia, through President Putin's recent visit to Teheran, has shown its willingness to intervene in the Middle East "to preserve stability". Turkey's recent moves and those of Russia are in line with our expectations from Bible prophecy; it is clear the events described in Ezekiel 38 and Daniel 11 could rapidly unfold.

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## The real delusion

I am impelled to take issue with the opinion that the "strong delusion" of 2 Thessalonians 2:11 is the modern-day theory of organic evolution ([Oct. 2007, p. 338](#)). This delusion is described as "a lie": "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie". The Scriptures deal with a number of lies, but we have to deal with the context of each passage to see which lie is being referred to. In this case we look for one that is so diabolical that it merits the description of "strong delusion".

It has truly been said, "A text without a context is a pretext". The context of this verse is that Christ would not return until there was "a falling away" (v. 3). Believers in Paul's day would see this "falling away" beginning, and so they did as Gnostic and mystical ideas soon began to assail the early church, as seen in the epistles of John.

Verse 11 is part of this prophecy, and therefore the "strong delusion" must be associated with this "falling away" or apostasy. What was the apostasy? It was the rapid development of a counterfeit church, a body of people resembling the true but corrupted by false doctrines and practices. These falsehoods included the immortality of the soul. This is the big lie that caused the problem right back in the beginning, in the fleshly reasoning of the serpent, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).

This "strong delusion" of an immortal soul makes the second coming of Christ unnecessary for salvation, and to this day the doctrine of the second coming is mainly absent from mainstream Christianity. Is it possible that, whilst all the other parts of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 have seen complete fulfilment over the past 1,900 years, it was 1,800 years before the "strong delusion" appeared in the form of Darwin's philosophy?

Verse 11 forms part of the overall prophecy of an apostasy, a prophecy that has been fulfilled from the earliest centuries after Christ right down

to our day. Therefore the "strong delusion" is part of the apostasy and has nothing to do with the modern theory of evolution. Furthermore, it is clear that we must look at the central teachings of the apostasy to discover the identity of the "strong delusion". Arguably the strongest doctrine of the apostasy is that mankind is immortal and that all 'good' people will be rewarded with a place in heaven. Therefore by this teaching it matters little what people believe. This is a very "strong delusion" and understandably popular, for it appeals to the flesh and the pride of man.

As far as our preaching goes, in the scale of things evolution theory is only a minor problem, and mainly in the UK. In Africa, for example, it is almost non-existent as a problem. The main barrier to the Truth is the Big Lie taught by almost all the established churches and nearly all other major religions—including Judaism and Islam—that provided you live a 'good' life you go instantly to a place of reward at death. Death by this teaching is simply a transfer station to another realm. This is taught worldwide in the press, on TV and in other media. The comfortable deluded message is that beliefs matter very little and everyone will be OK in the end. I submit that this is the "strong delusion", espoused by the whole world, and only opposed by the few who accept the mortality of man as taught in the Bible.

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Regarding the great delusion, may I add my own very personal hypothesis? Firstly, context demands application to once faithful members of the household, past and present, and not to apostate outsiders. How could we then be deluded as others have been? Many of our key doctrines involve a balancing between two key opposites. Going too far to one or the other, I would suggest, leads to delusion. Here are three examples:

- 1 Faith/works; that is, on the one hand believing that doctrine is everything, on the other hand believing that all that matters is how we behave.
- 2 Jesus is God/Jesus is mere man.
- 3 Law/grace.

It seems to me that most of the 'Christian' folk whom we would regard as having 'gone off the rails' have done so because of this lack of judgemental balance and have taken their arguments to extremes.

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