

## Doctrinal Summary of Satan & Company: The Source of the Spirit of Error

In 1 John 4:6 John identifies that there are two sources of information in this world, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

“We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

The phrase “spirit of error” is translated from the Koine Greek phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης (“tah pneu-mah taes plah-naes”) which is more literally translated as, “the spirit, being a tool or instrument used to accomplish something, belonging to the deviation from the proper course, based on response.” John uses the term “spirit” to refer to the source of messages (cf. 1 John 4:1), therefore “the spirit of error” refers to a source that provides a message which deviates from the proper message; it is a lie.

Since God cannot lie (cf. Num.23:19; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18), the spirit of error is not derived from Him, but Satan & Company. This is consistent with Satan’s work as exhibited in Scripture in events such as deceiving the fallen angels away from God (cf. Ezek. 28:18), deceiving the woman in the garden (cf. Gen. 3:1-5), and attempting to deceive God Himself through the temptations of Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:1-11).

The purpose of the spirit of error is to distract and deceive man away from the source of God’s message, the spirit of truth. The spirit of truth proclaims messages that correspond to reality by testifying to what is actual. Any deviation from that which corresponds to reality is not from the spirit of truth, but from the spirit of error which Satan & Company utilize in the hope of deceiving those who are carnal away from God, faith in Christ (cf. 1 Jn. 4:1-3), and the good works prepared by God for them to walk in (cf. Eph. 2:10). As Satan & Company spread deceptive messages through the spirit of error they deceive carnal humans who actively or passively accept their message as if it were truth. Paul identifies that this spirit works in them to produce a result in Ephesians 2:2.

“In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”

The word “working” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἐνεργοῦντος (“en-er-goun-tos”) which literally means, “performing the continuous type of action as a matter of principle to work in something to produce an effect or result, being a tool or instrument used to accomplish something.” The spirit of error performs the action to work within those who accept its message as truth. As it works in the minds, thoughts, and heart of those who accept its messages, it produces an effect in those who are deceived. Their perspective is clouded from reality, their thinking is shaped by their clouded perspective, and their norms and standards produce carnal actions.

Those deceived by the spirit of error are identified as “sons of disobedience” because they are in disobedience to God. This is true of believers and unbelievers alike. Despite being immune for judgment for sin, the believer is not immune from the deceptive messages which come from the spirit of error. This is evident from the many passages of Scripture which command the believer not to be deceived (cf. James 1:16; Luke 21:18; 1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; 1 Jn. 3:7). Satan & Company deploy a strategy of deception through the spirit of error to deceive carnal man into a faulty set of beliefs and keep man from recognizing and walking with God. All of this furthers their ultimate objective of overthrowing God.