

Strong Delusion – Br. Larry McClellan 2022 New Year Chicago Conv. MAKE SURE TO PUT REFERENCE SHEET ON CHAT

It's a delight to be with you at this Chicago Convention. We thank the Lord for the privilege. We pray this topic today will be thought-provocative, upbuilding and informational to you. It's what I believe regarding the passage you are all familiar with in 2 Thess. 2:11 - namely a "Strong Delusion". This discourse is going to definitely challenge many of you to consider rethinking possible events in the upcoming years of our changing times. It's an area of prophetic study seemingly shared by only a minority of Bible Students today – but an area, we suggest, held to consistently throughout Br. Russell's earthly ministry – from start to finish. It's a topic of investigation important – particularly to the fast-changing and the perilous time in which we live – to keep in mind the day's ahead.

2 Thess.2:11 "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

There are many questions we have here. Namely, What IS a delusion? For what cause or reason does God allow a delusion? Upon WHOM is this delusion SENT – and WHY? And the BIG question is this: WHAT IS the delusion that God permits to come? What are some of the POSSIBILITIES? And there are even more questions when we think about it, like: WHEN does this happen and HOW can we prepare ourselves from falling into this trap of delusion? My main objective is to make brethren aware of some possibilities and to prepare them for those possibilities – so they hopefully won't be "blindsided" by something unexpected.

So let's first tackle the question of what IS a delusion? We understand a delusion to be an error which has the APPEARANCE of Truth. By definition it's strong operational fraudulence of belief where something is firmly maintained despite being contradicted by what is generally accepted as reality – or rational argument.

Br. Russell states that: A delusion is more or less dangerous according to the importance of the truth which it misrepresents, beclouds or falsifies; and, if followed, it leads accordingly to more or less disastrous consequences." From R 2274 – an excellent article to take note of.

The world today has many delusions and deluded people – wouldn't you agree? But what is the delusion that this particular scripture in 2 Thess. 2 is referring to? Let's take a look at the context of this passage in 2 Thess. the second chapter and notice some things. I believe that CONTEXTUALLY, this chapter is about the nominal church system - particularly, the Antichrist. However, I believe Br. Russell gave several applications to this passage. But it does primarily appear to have a nominal system context – especially the Man of Sin. So keep this in mind as you try to unravel it's meaning - to stay focused. Keep in mind that the main context is about the Man of Sin, the Apostate Church.

So if you'll turn to 2 Thess. 2 you will see that the first few verses start talking about the "man of sin" and the "day of the Lord" doesn't it? Take a look. Apparently, there were some of the brethren who were advocating the idea or sophistry that the saints had already started to be risen from the grave and that the Day of the Lord's second presence had already begun – and Christ Jesus had returned. But notice that the Apostle tells them clearly that that could not happen until after the "man of sin" was revealed. Notice also that it indirectly proves that Jesus would not have a visual appearance of return, otherwise the Apostle would simply proclaim "So where do we see him?" "Has he appeared in the clouds somewhere? But no, they knew that Christ would not have a visible return. Jesus said plainly: "I go and the world seeth me know more." However, the context

of 2 Thess. 2 goes on to describe a little about that “man of sin”, that there would be a time when he was revealed, after which because of our Lord’s return this man of sin, or antichrist, would be destroyed by our King, Christ Jesus, during his second advent. This brings us down to verse 10 which basically says that there are some believers who would be deceived, not because they didn’t have a “love for the brethren” - but rather because they didn’t have a “Love for the Truth.” I believe a love for the “meat in due season” – brought to us by our returned Lord is part of this. So BOTH are very important to Jehovah. Love for the brethren AND love for the Truth. **But let us recall** a strong delusion that we find in Matthew 24:24. A delusion that appears to be SO strong that it will fool the world AND some of the Lord’s consecrated we understand. Let us read this one very carefully. Mat 24:20-24 KJV

Matt. 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. It seems clear to me from this passage and context that there will be some great delusion at the end of the Gospel Age in the Harvest – I suggest in the “winter”, the FINAL feature of the harvest. D 578-9

There were TWO seasons in the Jewish Calendar, the SUMMER and the WINTER. So I submit that we are talking about the latter part of this period of time, namely the WINTER, when the trouble and danger could be so pervasively great that every person on the face of the earth could be destroyed. Is that possible today? Matt. 24:22. There would be “signs and wonders” – notice in verse 24, that they are brought about by a false Christ and a false Prophet.

I believe if you check it out, these words are not necessarily in plural in the Greek language. They could be singular! And if you look carefully at e-sword Greek, it says that the false Christ rendered here could be a “false Messiah” and that the false prophet could be a religious imposter or just false prophet. Incidentally, I want you to notice, that in both 2 Thess. 2:9 we see “signs and wonders,” in the context of the Strong delusion, as well as here in Matt. 24:24. Interesting! I consider that a contextual link between these two passages that could suggest they are talking about the same period of time as well as the possibility of being from the same source – at least in part. See also a possible connection with Rev. 16:13 and 14 where miracles are used by demonic spirit forces come from not only the dragon, but also, the false prophet and the beast. I can’t help but wonder – if in all these cases we are not possibly looking at some “strong delusion” in the near future – that will deceive EVERYBODY – even the Great Company – But NOT “the very elect”. Matt. 24:24 Some strong delusion that could even deceive some of those of the Great Company – which we know walk amongst us, even today. That would have to be a pretty big deception, wouldn’t it? Keep in mind that the vitalization of the Image completely morphing into the false prophet hasn’t happened yet. AND keep in mind that the fallen angels will be getting more and more liberty. Rev. 13:14-18, Jude 6

So, we were discussing the passages in 2 Thess. 2 and also in Matthew 24, that talked about brethren being “deluded” in the latter part of the Gospel Age. We also noticed that there were “signs and wonders” in the

contextual areas of both passages. Actually, the Greek word “sign” in both cases is “siemien” which COULD refer to a “supernatural indication”.

The Greek word for “wonder” is “ter’as” which can mean an “omen”. An omen is an EVENT regarded as a portent of good or evil. Don’t you find it interesting that BOTH of these passages use both of these terms. Could this STRONG DELUSION possibly be - some supernatural indication or event that FOOLS the whole world? Boy, that would be hard to believe, wouldn’t it. That something supernatural could possibly occur - that would fool the whole world, even the Great Company, but NOT the very elect. R 267 - R 2189 Now we notice that in 2 Thess. 2 the context has been talking about the Lord’s Day and the Man of Sin.

You know from your second volume studies that the Man of Sin is the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. In that volume we also read that the Antichrist, that Mystery of Iniquity, is that Papal System of the Apostate Church. Again, many wonderful Catholic people, good people, that have been duped by this Papal system and her beliefs. All the Reformers knew who the Man of Sin was. Even my King James Preface indicates that from this 1959 edition. The Papacy, or Anti-Christ, is the system that acknowledges the Pope as he who rules “instead of” Christ as a vicar of Christ. So we could basically term the Pope as a FALSE CHRIST, couldn’t we. He’s sure not the TRUE Christ. Recall from what we read from Matt. 24:24 – that there would be a FALSE CHRIST involved in this delusion, whatever it is.

We also notice from this same passage in Matthew 24:24 that there would be a FALSE PROPHET. Br. Russell tells us in the forward of the fourth volume, page x, we find this identification by Br. Russell, where he alludes to Rev. 16:13. First let’s turn to Rev. 16:13 and then we will quote his take on this scriptural identification.

Rev 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, (there’s that word “Say –me-on” again) which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of - the - whole - world, (that’s the whole earth or globe in the Greek) to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Now - Br. Russell’s comment: Vol 4 - page x - “In Rev. 16:13 we find mention of the False Prophet, another representation of the Image—the vitalized product of the Evangelical Alliance, which has taken the form of Church Federation, and has today a great deal of vitality. Whether we can expect it to have more remains to be seen. (Incidentally, FYI - the Evangelical Alliance today has 600 million evangelicals. That’s no small number. 600,000,000)

“Notice this important statement dear friends. Br. Russell says that “the BIBLE” says this! And I quote: “The Scriptures clearly indicate that the Image of the Beast is to get so great power that it will do the same thing that the Roman Catholic Church did in the past; and that the two systems, Catholic and Protestant, LISTEN NOW! “will rule the civilized world with a high hand through the civil power—the Dragon.” Could THIS be the strong delusion of 2 Thess. 2 and Matt. 24:24? Could THIS be the “FALSE CHRIST” and the “FALSE PROPHET” that Matt 24:24 refers to that - by some miraculous way – when the fallen spirits are given even more liberty (Jude 6) that a spurious imposter that pretends to be a MESSIAH of sorts – arises by some miraculous means to save the world from ANARCHY. “Fear not THEIR fear.” Recall the words in Isaiah 8:9-12? Please read and factor in what Br. Russell said on p. 581 of Volume 4 in our Lord’s great prophecy, verses 23-25, as you consider this. D p. 580-581.

Now I realize that this is pretty hard to believe. But since the seventh messenger said it and said that the “scriptures CLEARLY indicate” - I’d take some serious time to search out why he said this. Personally, I don’t see how this could happen unless some pretty drastic or “miraculous events” changed in the world; something dramatic, and spurred on by the fallen angels in the four winds of heaven. R4822 Many dear friends do not factor in the fallen angels and Satan – with “all power” of spiritualistic forces, perhaps miraculous forces giving impetus to these events. 2 Thess. 2:9, R 2189. I suggest this takes place, “In the winter time”. Nothing changes unless SOMETHING changes – right? This would be a game-changer for sure. Something unexpected. Notice how Jannes and Jambres, two magicians, are brought into the context of the “last days in 2 Tim. 3: 8-9. See also 2 Cor. 11:14-15

I’ve never found a place where Br. Russell EVER applied Rev. 13:15, where “life” is given to the “image of the Beast”; as an occurrence of the past – prior to 1897. It was future from that point. I too, believe this is still future. If you’ve found anyplace where Br. Russell applies Rev. 13:13-18 PRIOR to 1897 - please show me.

Actually, we could have possibly already seen the foregleams of this in Feb. 2002, with the “Call to Common Mission” where 10,000 churches in North America could NOT ordain a bishop in the Lutheran Church without the “laying on of hands,” or Apostolic Succession by an Anglican Bishop. This is a pretty big step.

The image of the Beast from what the scripture show, MUST be given “life’ or apostolic succession, for it to MORPH into the FALSE prophet. That’s what the Pastor taught. Again, Rev. 13:15, R 5349. A very important reprint reference. It’s one of those “must read” articles. Incidentally, I did some research and found that as of 2020 there are 2.6 BILLION Christian adherents in the world, which makes Christianity the LARGEST RELIGIOUS GROUP IN THE WORLD. That’s UP from 2.3 billion in 2015, so it seems to be growing. That’s from “World Religion Database” from Boston University. There are 500,000,000 (500 MILLION) members in the World Council of Churches, including 349 member churches. Now listen to the Bible:

Isa 8:9-12 “Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. 10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. 11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12 Say ye not, A confederacy, (in Hebrew: an UNLAWFUL alliance) to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. See also D 262 para. 1 From what I’ve read of Br. Russell, he always applied this scripture to an alliance. The word in Isa. 8:12 comes from the Hebrew “keh-sheer” and the first three words defining it in the Strongs are “an unlawful alliance”. So that’s what Br. Russell believed, and that’s what I believe as well. It’s talking about some kind of “confederacy, that’s an unlawful alliance”. 1 Sam. Chapter 5, and 2 Kings 9:30-37 as well as Dan. 3:5-7.

Br. Russell goes on to say in Vol. 4 p. xii that the “fear of anarchy” will be the message used by this confederacy to twist the arms of otherwise sensible people, into joining what he calls on p. xii, PLEASE NOTICE!! This is an incredible statement. This confederacy he calls, “the most GIGANTIC power ever yet exercised in the world”. Did you catch that? WOW - and I thought the Catholic Church before 1914 was the biggest power ever. Guess what? This one, Br. Russell says, is even BIGGER YET! Again, that’s Vol 4 p. xii. Could this confederacy, like Dagon, in Daniel 3, where Shadrack, Meshack and Abendigo were commanded to bow down, but refused, be this STRONG DELUSION that compels a very desperate world, and perhaps even some desperate Christians, to go in a direction that you would never expect? Possibly. Especially - if the fallen angels

were operating in conjunction with greater liberty to do miraculous things? R 2494-5 Don't expect it? I understand. I know it's hard to believe.

Well, let me ask you this: Did you ever expect a group of people, including many Christian zealots, to be able to storm our USA Capital Building like they did on January 6th almost a year ago - and almost take control? And almost capture VP Mike Pence and harm Mrs. Pelosi? A cry went out to "hang VP Pence" as they stormed the Capital Building hallways. There was actually a scaffold and noose in the vicinity. Senators were laying on the ground with "gas masks on" - in fear for their lives. If I told you someone could do that - in the Capital of one of the strongest nations on earth - breaking windows and putting blood on statues - you would probably have told me "NO WAY!" Could never happen. (wait) But it DID, didn't it. Never expected something like that to happen.

Brethren, I'm sharing this with you for this reason: "expect the unexpected" - don't get "blind-sided" IF things turn out different than what you are expecting. Isn't that what happened to the nation of Israel, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem - on a donkey? Didn't even the Apostles get a shaken up and disorientated - when Jesus was crucified, and they expected he would set up the Kingdom?

What could have happened - if former President Trump showed up on January 6th at the Capital Building and declared "martial law"? Food for thought.

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I want you and I to be ready and submissive to however the Lord choses to take the last members of the body of Christ. In Rev. 12:17 we see where the civil powers, the dragon, make war with the saints some time after 1799, and we see from Rev. 17:12-14 apparently – not a (22 m.) church/state system, but a church-state alliance in the future – “an hour of power” again, where the dragon, or civil powers have “one mind” to go after the weakest flank of the Lamb, that is the saints of God – they are “chosen”, or “elect’ in God’s eyes and then the Whore of Babylon, the great Apostate Church, symbolic Jezebel, will be destroyed AFTER the churches completion, or all been “chosen”. (stop) Rev. 17:16 here seems to match up with the context intent of 2 Thess. 2: 8 where the Man of Sin is completely destroyed – annihilated. Incidentally, The word “chosen” there is also the word “elect” – which tells me the Church has all been taken or “sealed” – head and heart. The “faithful elect”. Has this happened? THEN this great church system is destroyed – thereafter. Rev. 17:16.

Speaking of “expecting the unexpected”. Factor in that about 85% of our Congress is either Catholic or Protestant. Factor in that presently 7 out of 9 Supreme Court Judges are Catholic. Volume 2 p. 262: (Listen carefully friends) “It would not be surprising if a “strong government,” a monarchy, would some day replace this present Great Republic; and it is entirely probable, that one common standard of religious belief will be deemed expedient and will be promulgated, to teach outside of which will be treated and punished as a political offense.” Dan. 3:9-11

Dear friends, I believe this was always Br. Russell's expectations, from the beginning to the end of his ministry. Believe what you like. You have that right and liberty, but please take an open mind and Check out our reference sheet. Look up the references given. Br. Russell was never wrong on prophetic sequence. He was off on his full expectations of 1914, but I don't believe he was ever wrong in what he said was the probable prophetic scriptural sequence of events. Even still – making a prediction of a huge event like 1914 over 30 years before it happened is still pretty impressive. And he knew that from putting together the prophetic puzzle. For more answers to Dan. 3's understanding relating to this subject, I highly recommend dear Br. Allen Springer's discourse on this at Colorado Conv. 2021. An excellent discourse relating to this topic.

Persecution would not only furnish, in the end or harvest of this age, another parallel to the harvest's TYPE of the Jewish Age's END persecution (Acts 4:10-13, 23-30; 5:29-41; 11:19), but would also give a wider and deeper significance to the words of the Apostles Paul and John (2 Tim. 4:3; Rev. 13:17), and to the typical illustrations of the close of the earthly career of the true Church, as represented in Elijah's whirlwind departure and John the Baptist's imprisonment and beheading" – both taught by the Pastor. Study very carefully ALL of 2 Tim. 3:1-13.

Brethren, do you wonder how close we got to this on Jan. 6th of this year – with dozens and dozens of Christian Nationalists and many other Christian zealots storming the Capital Building –over 1000 protestors showed up, not all Christians, but some ready to take over the country for a powerful leader they believed in? Especially if he is supported favorably by the military or powerful church leaders! Over 1000 protestors – defying the police and ransacking Nancy Pelosi's office; only feet away from the Senate floor where senators laying on the floor had gas masks on – with fear.

Br. Russell wasn't talking about a "European picture here " in what I quoted, although trouble could happen there as well. He was talking about RIGHT HERE in the United States of America, as he says, "this present Great Republic". He said it was entirely probable. I believe this could very well be the vitalized Protestant Evangelical Alliance WITH the Papacy; the false prophet with the false Christ, together; supported by a government. A spurious Messiah or sorts. Please read Volume 4 p3 in the 1916 Author's Foreward if you wish to get Br. Russell's view on these scriptures as of 1916, where he says that the Nominal Systems, future from 1916, would rise to great prominence with the Civil powers. He said they were already rolling together as a scroll and would, future from 1916, reign as "a queen", and the Truth would be suppressed. Read Rev. 18: 7, D p.3 AuthF. where I believe Br. Russell is quoting from "reign as a queen".

Brethren, these thoughts take research. LOTS of research. Friends, "the PLOWMAN is about to overtake the REAPER". There are some dear brethren that are already getting into politics, as if they're going to prop up a disintegrating political entity. Brethren, who is bulldozing the governments of this world to prepare his Messianic Kingdom? Don't fight against HIM.

Our kingdom is not of this world. Could THIS be a STRONG DELUSION - of joining in with nominal church systems; to save the present establishment? I got to tell you, this rise to power is exactly what Br. Russell said the scriptures "clearly taught" from the prophetic testimony. See R 5601-2. You may not agree, and I respect your right to believe otherwise, but that's what he taught from start to finish in his ministry. Let me show you what I'm talking about. There is a compelling article – a MUST to read, found in R5349, that we mentioned earlier.

Under the title “the Image of the Beast”. Notice how Br. Russell states THIS is the way he interprets Revelation. And I quote: “As, we understand this Chapter of Revelation, the Image, as soon as vitalized, will very promptly use its influence, prestige, power, in every way to “make fire come down from heaven” (Rev. 13:13); that is, to punish in the name of the Lord those who in any sense of the word it shall consider to be its opponents. Speedily none will be allowed to buy or sell, in the spiritual marts, except those who have either the mark or the number of the Beast, or of the Image, either in the right hand of co-operation or in the forehead of public confession. PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY DEAR BRETHERN: “This will mean that the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION - and all others not in affiliation WITH the Alliance - will be subjected to radically coercive measures.” THIS is a possibility to seriously consider dear friends.

“Truth shall fall in the streets. Righteousness will be unable to enter under the stress of - the new order of things. For a time it will appear as though a great Christian victory had been won, shared equally by (NOTICE) Papacy and federated—Protestantism—no longer protesting. Already we see these two divisions of the heavens rolling together, approaching one another, sympathizing with each other—rolling together for mutual protection. D 258 bottom Isa. 34:4-8 But the triumph of that new order of things will be short. The masses of the people, no longer ignorantly stupid as during the Dark Ages, will awaken to the true situation, and will execute upon Babylon the Great—already repudiated by the Lord—the judgment foretold. She shall be cast like a great millstone into the sea, never to rise again. The sea represents the masses of the people, especially a restless opposition class. Rev. 18:21 “and shall be found NO MORE AT ALL.

Now I wish to go back and call your attention to 2 Th 2:8. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and (notice) shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: THIS word destroy, is speaking about the Apostate, the Man of Sin, the SAME exact word as in Hebr. 2:14 where it talks about Jesus destroying Satan. Now I understand that when Jesus destroys Satan – he is made void, utterly useless and will vanish away. I ask you this: Have we ever seen the Apostate, the Man of Sin, vanish away or be made utterly useless? It’s still an active entity in world affairs. If you could ask Ronald Reagan back in 1981 if the Pope was utterly useless when they both together helped bring down Communism in Poland, he would certainly tell you that the Pope was VERY useful in that process, wouldn’t he. I suggest that this part of the scripture in 2 Thess. 2:8, might still have a future application. I believe that the Papacy is not “down for the count” just yet. It’s interesting to note that all three of the Greek words describing the phases or stages of Christ’s return are in this scripture. Could that mean that this would take place in the Apocolupto, or Apocalypse phase? Do you believe that the Apocalypse has taken place yet for the world? Personally, I think that the Apocalyse is still ahead. I also don’t believe that the nominal systems are dead yet. First, because in Revelation 19:20 it tells us that the nominal systems will be cast “alive” into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Not DEAD, but ALIVE when the time comes. Exercising it’s powers! I think they still have LIFE. I believe this destruction is AFTER the Church is complete. Notice that in Rev. 19:14 and 19:19, the Revelator goes from “armies” plural – that were following Christ on white horses (BOTH sides of the vail – verse 14) to “army” singular – glorified verse 19. Now - Let’s look at some facts.

It might be helpful to note that the World Evangelical Alliance is a “network” of churches in 129 nations that have each formed an Evangelical Alliance and over 100 international organizations joining together to give a world wide identity, voice and platform (are you listening?) to more than 600 MILLION Evangelical Christians. That’s a 6 with 8 zeros after it. That’s a LOT of people, isn’t it. It doesn’t look like its dead to me. This is just part of the picture of the “rising up” of the Church/State, like raising up the millstone. Rev. 18:21, D37 Please

note parallels particularly of Papacy's fall in 1st Samuel Chapter 5. That would be a great class study. Listen to Br. Harry Nugent's talk on The Image of Dagon for some great insights.

And when it is thrown down, in Rev. 18:21, the scriptures say "it is found NO MORE AT ALL". Period. No Ronald Reagan/Pope John Paul alliance to bring down Communism, stuff like that. When you look at the Greek words here, it means: et-ee "after that" henceforth" "hereafter" SO "no more hereafter" - and oo-may means "any more, ever, not at all". So the Church rises up and goes down, and there is NO MORE AT ALL. Not even socially – nothing left! That's the "treading of the winepress" picture I believe in Rev. 14:20 and the "burning of the tares" in Matt. 13:40-42. That's what the Greek means as we mentioned earlier. Brethren, please understand, when this happens, this rising up of the Church/State, and then thrown down, there is nothing left of the Churches AT ALL, EVER, ANY MORE, NOT AT ALL – from now on. Could it be any clearer? Are there still Churches around? Do they still have any power? It falls gradually at first, then it falls very quickly – like a leaf, and then like a fig. See Isaiah 34:4.

Let me ask you. Is money POWER in this world? Yes or no? The Catholic church alone is worth about 84.3 BILLION dollars. If money is POWER – they have a LOT of power. Especially if we come to a desperate world of financial depression in the days ahead, and countries like Greece, in 2009, have to be "bailed out" of financial ruin. Just keep that in mind. The two-horned Beast of Rev. 13:11-15 apparently loses its personality when it gives life to the Image by becoming a member of the Church Federation. Br. R says, "But the sure word of prophecy indicates very clearly - that the various Protestant sects will form a cooperative union or confederacy, and that Catholicism and Protestantism will affiliate, neither losing its identity. These are the two ends of the ecclesiastical heavens which as their confusion increases, shall roll together as a scroll (Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14) for self-preservation – as distinct and separate rolls, yet in close proximity to each other. Isa. 8:12 It would be a very "thorny coexistence" of cooperation. D 552 Nahum 1:5-10

And if this DOES happen, you better be sure where you stand, no matter what happens. Because if you give support to the "mark of the beast, or it's image" Br. Russell goes on to say: "We may be sure that they will make the road to the preaching and teaching of the Gospel a very narrow one to all attempting to preach without their recognition and ordination. These will be trying times upon us and upon all who will refuse to worship the Beast and his Image, or to receive the mark of the Beast upon the forehead or upon the hand. — and then he quotes Revelation 13:15-17."

So THIS was Br. Russell's view of Rev. 13:15-17. Take it or leave it. But I'm going to take it, because Br. Russell knew the scriptures a LOT better than I do. A lot better than any of us – in my opinion. Brethren, I believe you LOSE YOUR CROWN - if you give support or allegiance to this Beast, it's "mark" or the Image who then has life as a False Prophet – this colossal entity that rises up to momentarily rule the world. But it won't last long if this happens. Rev. 20:4 "and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had (notice!) not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Compare the parallel in Rev. 13:15-17.

The above compliments his statement in the foreward of Volume 4 p. xi "The Bible says, however, that before the Image can do any particular harm it must receive life from the two-horned Beast. And Br. R quotes (Rev. 13:15) This two-horned Beast with horns like a lamb, but a voice like a dragon, we believe represents the Church of England, which is not a party to the Evangelical Alliance. The Church of England makes the claim

which the Church of Rome makes—that she is the true Church; that all others are wrong; that she has the original apostolic succession; and that no one is commissioned to preach unless he has had divine, apostolic hands laid upon him. THIS is what vitalizes or gives LIFE to the Image of the Beast in Rev. 13. I believe when this fully comes it means the Churches – Catholic and Protestant have fully rolled together as a scroll. I ask you: When have we seen ALL of this happen? OR is it future.

This Apostolic Succession has been the contention of the Church of England for centuries, and constitutes the difference between that Church - and all other Protestant denominations.” Most of us know nothing about this – but this is HUGE in the religious circles. (Bring up the “Cause to Common Council” 1999 booklet.) IF you’ll take the time to read this 5349 article, Br. Russell states that the Evangelical Alliance, that was formed in 1846, which Br. Russell styled the “Image of the Beast”, (Ref. D ix top) was expected by him to offer the hands of an Episcopal Priest to offer Churches of other protestant faiths the precious “laying on of hands” for authentic holy ordination. Incidentally, the Episcopal Church is worth about 11 billion dollars today. That’s why I say this booklet could be it’s “foregleams”. (HOLD) You can download it from the chat window. But please listen to this first!

Br. Russell said, in R 5349: “Perhaps this recognition of the Image is all the vitalization the Image needs, but – (notice!) we are inclined to expect more. For years the Episcopalians have proffered reordination to the ministers of the different denominations represented in the Evangelical Alliance. And they still proffer it. We have been inclined to expect that the ministers would finally concede the point and accept a reordination at the hands of an Episcopal bishop. But we are not sure of this. It is possible that, to meet the requirements of the case, some other way will be found by which the Episcopal Church will recognize the Church Federation without obligating the ministers to be reordained. We are waiting for this.” This is what Apostolic “laying on of hands” is - what I understand in Rev. 13:15 describes as “giving LIFE”, like a breath of air. Reprint 5601. Br. R prediction comes true, in part, in 2002. Vol. 4 ix and x. R 3390 at the top also, where Br. Russell lists what the scriptures indicate will be the sequence of events to be looked for! You also might like to look a quick synopsis of the time order of events of the closing of the harvest in three brief paragraphs. What/Pastor Russell Said p 626 - His 1916 view.

So now, coming back to this “Strong Delusion”. What could it possibly be? Please don’t rule out what I just presented in part as a POSSIBLE strong delusion – That is: An illegal alliance of the Nominal Systems with the symbolic Dragon of Civil Powers. Expect the unexpected, if some causal factor changes the present status quo. I’m merely quoting the Pastors writings, consistent throughout his ministry with some additional thoughts of my own. I’ve given you many references, I believe - to support these possibilities. Even though Br. Russell’s expectations would be closer to his day, we feel the “accordion approach” of stretching out those expectations - based on his scriptural viewpoint, could be stretched out to our time frame. So - it appears to me, from the many scriptural references and the Pastor’s writings, that this Strong Delusion of 2 Thess. 2:8:11 could come from the Nominal System Churches in a rolled together alliance - of a Beast, the Papal System as a whole, and a False Prophet (the vitalized product of Federated Protestantism) supported by a Dragon, (the Civil Powers). I know this doesn’t seem plausible with present conditions, but I submit that conditions - can change quickly - given the right circumstances and a desperate situation of society staring anarchy straight in the “eye”; along with something unexpected - from the fallen angels – who will soon have even MORE liberty. If someone comes along to you, as an authorized agency, and gives you a choice of subscribing to a new order of things, an alliance, OR, letting your country fall into the abess of horrible anarchy; WHICH - would most

people choose? It's called the illusion of choice. Neither are good; but one stands out as the better alternative, especially if it protects your assets, physical and financial security. Keep in mind the statement Br. Russell made on F656 also, where he says "No others of the Adversaries snares are so alluring, so deceptive, so powerful as this one - speaking of the Nominal Churches." And with all this being said, I'm inclined to think that this strong delusion might very well come from the NOMINAL SYSTEMS in alliance with the civil systems – as unlikely as that may seem to you. (Called to Common Mission download.)

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Commentary_on_Called_to_Common_Mission.pdf?_ga=2.247771143.1296724680.1631805504-699793677.1631805504

Was the French Revolution a type? Was John the Baptist last days a type? Was the Dan. 3 scenario with Dagon a type? Br. Russell had interesting articles on all of these events. Maybe you've read them. Disagree if you wish. That's your right and liberty in Christ. Let's "wait and see" how it all unfolds. But I suggest dear brethren, to be prepared for whatever way the Lord directs this issue. For whatever STRONG DELUSION may come to entrap those who are not solidly rooted in the Truth. Don't you or me - get blindsided - because we were so sure we were right in our expectations. Look what happened to many brethren in 1914 when the Churches glorification didn't take place the way they expected. Many fell away. We'll take a "wait and see" outlook and do what our Master said to do, to "WATCH" and PRAY. LOVE the brethren, that's for sure; but fail not to show God – that you LOVE THE TRUTH. For the TRUTH, as one dear brother used to say, "is everything to live for, and everything to die for." Let us not fail, to LOVE the TRUTH. So IN CONCLUSION:

2 Thess 2 - And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (apokoluto) of his presence: 9 Even him, whose presence is after the working of Satan with all power and signs (say-me-on) and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And "for this cause" God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned (or judged) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Verse 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. And finally, from Deut. 13:3 for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God - with ALL your heart - and with ALL your soul. Amen

Discourse: “Strong Delusion” – Chicago Convention 2022 - Strong Delusion Discourse References

2 Thess. 2:8-12 “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: vs. 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, vs.10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. vs. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: vs. 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” KJV

<u>Scriptures</u>	Dan. 3	Vol 4 p. 36-37
2 Thess. Chapter 2	Rev. 20:4	Vol 4 pgs. 578-579
Rev. 13:14-18	John 9:4	Vol 4 p. iii 1916 Fore.
Matt. 24:20-24	Isa. 21:12	
Rev. 16:13-14	Mark 6:17-29	Vol 5 p. 656
Isaiah 8:9-12	Eph. 5:13 (Margin)	<u>Reprint References</u>
Jude 6	<u>Volume Pages</u>	R 267
2 Cor. 11:14	Vol 2 – pgs. 359-361	R 2189
Rev. 17:12-14	Vol 2 – pgs. 261-263	R 5349
Rev. 18:7	Vol 4 - page x	R 2274-5
Heb. 2:14	Vol 4 - pgs. 580-581	R 2218-19
Rev. 19:20	Vol 4 p. 258 bottom	R 2494-95
Rev. 18:21	Vol 4 p. 262 para. 1	R 5601
2 Kings 9:30-37	Vol 4 p. xii-xiii	R 4873
I Sam. 5	Vol 4 Author’s Fore. p. 3 (1916)	R 1754
		R 4822

Other References

Pastor Russell’s Sermons pp. 232-239

What Pastor Russell Said p. 626

Link to “Called to Common Cause Mission” booklet:

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Commentary_on_Called_to_Common_Mission.pdf?_ga=2.247771143.1296724680.1631805504-699793677.1631805504

For a written transcript of this discourse, email: larrydmcclellan@gmail.com