



good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20). These are lies and deceptions. They must be avoided! Paul encourages us in this endeavor saying, “we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14).

How do we avoid being deceived? The only way is by thoroughly knowing the truth. God has revealed His will which is “**profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work**” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Anything that does not match the written word of God is false. An example I have often heard used is that of counterfeit money. Those who are trained to distinguish between counterfeit and genuine money do not study counterfeit money in great detail. Rather, they spend their time becoming thoroughly acquainted with real money. Because they study real money so much, fake money is immediately evident to them. Are we that way with God’s word? Do we study it so much that we immediately see when someone is trying to deceive us into believing a lie? Knowledge of God’s truth is the only way to avoid Satan’s deception.



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ISSUE

16.14

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

April 6,
2014



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Eddie Cook
Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

“Don’t Be Deceived”

By Andrew Dow

It is likely safe to say that we have all been deceived at one time or another. To deceive is simply “to make someone believe something that is not true” (Merriam-Webster). Some today use deception to maliciously mislead others from the truth. Where did deception come from, who is behind it, and how is a Christian to respond? Let’s explore the Biblical teaching concerning these questions.

Deception from the Beginning

A simple reading of Genesis 1-2 should impress us with the power of our God and the glory of His creation. The creation of the physical universe is consistently called “good” (Genesis 1:4, 12, 18, 21, 25). Finally, when His creation was completed, “**God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good**” (Genesis 1:31, NASU). Chapter two concludes the creation account with the impression that everything is as it should be. The picture is one of peace, contentment, completeness, and truth.

Unfortunately, this perfect picture is dramatically altered in chapter three. You may recall that Satan, as a serpent, appeared to Eve and tempted her with the forbidden fruit. Despite Eve’s hesitation, the serpent convinced her, “**You surely will not die!**”

(Genesis 3:4). As a result of this encounter Eve ate of the fruit, Adam ate of the fruit, and both were removed from the paradise of God's presence. What happened? Why did the story change so drastically? Paul explains it this way, "**The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness**" (2 Corinthians 11:3).

It does not take one long to find deception in the Bible. Deception was present in the beginning of time and it has continued to plague man throughout history. Before they conquered the land of Canaan Israel was warned, "**Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and**

that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them" (Deuteronomy 11:16). The fact that Moses gave this warning shows us how important it was that Israel guard against deception. Jeremiah offered a similar warning when Israel was on the brink of captivity, "**For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you.... For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the Lord**" (Jeremiah 29:8-9). Again, the warning of the Lord indicates how important it is to avoid being deceived.

Satan's Work in Deception

It is no coincidence that Satan is called "**the father of lies**" (John 8:44). In fact, as we've already pointed out, Satan introduced deception to the world in the beginning when he "**deceived Eve by his craftiness**" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Paul later points out that "**Satan disguises himself as an angel of light**" (2 Corinthians 11:14). In the book of Revelation we read, "**The great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world**" (Revelation 12:9). This verse clearly alludes to Genesis 3 where Satan first deceived Eve. Notice, however, that Satan is described as deceiving "**the whole world.**" Certainly Satan is "**the father of lies.**"

Peter described this great deceiver as "**a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour**" (1 Peter 5:8). Is it any wonder then that we are encouraged to "**put on the full armor of God, so that you will be stand firm against the schemes of the devil**" (Ephesians 6:11)? The Greek word translated "schemes" (*methodeia*) is defined by Thayer's as, "cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery" (pg. 395-396). Therefore, Paul is telling us that we need to be able to overcome the deceit, or trickery of the devil. Paul wrote another church with these words, "**For indeed what I have**

forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:10-11). The Scriptures make it clear that Satan wants to deceive us into acting contrary to God's will. We must be aware of the potential danger, and guard against it!

While Satan is the "**father of lies,**" and he does work to deceive us, we must not assume that deception will only come directly from Satan. The Holy Spirit describes those who "**are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness**" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). All too often the deception of Satan is accomplished through the ideas of men. These men may have proper intentions, but it has been correctly written, "**Evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived**" (2 Timothy 3:13).

A Warning to Christians

Thus far we have observed that (1) deception has been plaguing man since the beginning of time and throughout history, and (2) that deception originated with, and is sustained by Satan, "**the father of lies.**" It should not surprise us then that Christians are constantly warned against being deceived.

Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren, "**Let no one deceive you with empty words**" (Ephesians 5:6). Similarly, he instructed the Christians at Colossae, "**See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy**



and empty deception" (Colossians 2:8). John wrote, "**Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning**" (1 John 3:7-8). Why did a statement that seems so simple need to be written to Christians? Because there are people in the world who are incredibly persuasive. They are going to try to convince you of things that are contrary to plain truth. Their message is like those in Isaiah's day "**who call evil good, and**

