

DON'T BE DECEIVED (Part 1)

"The Danger of Deception"

INTRO: "Can you remember a time when you were deceived, either by someone else or yourself?" Sales person, boss, co-worker, family member,... My guess is we've all been deceived, probably more than a few times. Being deceived makes us feel violated, stupid, angry, etc. Deception is as old as the Bible and is common to all. Term "deceived" (or derivatives) found 167 times in Bible (joy-150; grace-130; peace-113; hope-95). Surprise you? Who or what makes it possible? Does Scripture give us specific warnings about the possibility and danger of deception—and inform us of specific areas of danger?

I. SATAN IS SOURCE OF ALL DECEPTION

A. Satan is a liar and a deceiver (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:3, Jam. 1:14; Rev. 12:9; 13:14; 20:8-10). He opposes God whenever and wherever he can—we are caught in his web of deception as fallen human beings and followers of Christ.

1. Began in heaven. He deceived millions of created angels to join his rebellion against God (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19, esp. v.18 as he sold his cause to other angels—more than a third embraced his deception (Rev. 12:4).

2. Continued in the Garden (Gen. 3:1, 4, 13). God created a perfect world with great freedom and only one restriction (Gen. 2:15-17). He lied and deceived Eve (2 Cor. 11:3). How was he able to deceive Eve and people today? Gen. 3:1-7

- He tempts us to doubt God's integrity, character, and word. He lies to us whispering God cannot be trusted and is not good.
- He promises us what he cannot deliver without harm to us. He promises pleasure (v.6 "good"). He promises wisdom (vv.5-6). He promises us power and no accountability (v.5 "be like God"). All lies to deceive. His strategy works. Examples: Eve, Adam, Cain, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, David (1 Chron 21),... Rich Young Ruler, Prodigal Son, Demas,...

3. Continued with Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-11). As a liar and deceiver, Satan tempts us to disobey God's will. He wisely mixes in just enough truth to deceive us with his lies. Satan's deceptive design doesn't change. As with Eve and Adam, so with Jesus in the desert, he tempts us to be selfish (look out for #1), to compromise, and to doubt God's goodness can be trusted:

#1 (Lk. 4:3) Selfishness – attacks at point of need and weakness to get him to act independent of God. Response? quoted truth.

#2 (Lk. 4:5-7) Compromise – from lust of the flesh to lust of the eyes to have power. Compromise God's will by doing it your way. Answer? quoted truth

#3 (Lk. 4:9-11) Doubt that God's goodness and faithfulness can be trusted. Response? quoted truth

II. SATAN'S PAWNS IN HIS STRATEGY OF DECEPTION

A. Our own fallenness and willingness to take his bait (Jam. 1:15). We easily deceive ourselves (Jer. 17:9; Eph 4:22). We have deceived ourselves into every unwise decision we've ever made.

B. Demonic spirits at work through false teachers (Matt. 24:4-5, 11, 23-24; 1 Tim. 4:1)

C. Morally fallen culture – not neutral or helpful. The days are evil.

III. OUR WISE RESPONSE?

- A. Train conscience and mind with God's truth (Psa. 119:11)
- B. Learn the voice of the Holy Spirit and heed it (1 Jn. 4:1)
- C. Invite truth-tellers into your life (Pro. 12:15)
- D. "Put on the shield of faith." (Eph. 6:16)

CONC: Satan is a liar and a deceiver and he is out to lead you astray. Don't be deceived! That's a warning from a friend, pastor, and teacher.