

Deception (2)

In last week's NEWSLETTER, we looked into scripture that spoke to us about Satan's plan to deceive people into thinking that God is not the source of all truth. In Genesis, Satan basically called God a liar and Adam and Eve believed him instead of God. Jesus says that lying is Satan's native language, and that many of the Jewish leaders spoke lies about Him to deceive the people. In **I Samuel**, Saul is convinced, in his own mind, not once, but twice, to do what he thought was best, although it was contrary to the instructions he had been given from God through Samuel. And in **Matthew 15**, Jesus says that many in His time were teaching their view of things rather than God's, making their traditions and customs and rituals doctrine—as if God Himself had authorized them.

I ended the article last week with the statement: "Sound familiar?" What I meant was that all the things said about Satan's deception are still going on today. We need to be able to recognize the **MAJOR** difference between what God **SAID** and what **WE THINK** God **MEANT** when He said what He said.

In **Matthew 23**, Jesus pronounces seven woes on what He calls hypocrites. The scribes and the Pharisees were teaching the greater importance of their "rules" over God's intentions when He gave them the Ten Commandments. Looking religious was more important than being religious. Ceremonial washing was more important than cleansing the heart. The most telling of all was His statement to them in **verse 23**:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."

Adhering to the rule to tithe was most important to them. However, the giving of themselves was more important. Being fair and merciful and faithful to God's word was what they should have been concerned with. Obviously, they were not. In **Matthew 24**, **Mark 13**, and **Luke 21**, Jesus warned us about "**false Messiahs**" who would "**come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many.**" These people would claim Jesus' authorization, although they were of the devil.

Paul warned the Romans in **Romans 16:18**: "**By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.**" They'll say all the right things to make you believe them, but they are lies. The Colossians were taught what was called the "Colossian Heresy" that attacked the all-sufficiency of Jesus as the Creator, Savior, and Advocate. Paul reemphasized the truth that they had been taught. He warns them in **Colossians 2**: "**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments....See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.**"

The **Galatians** had been deceived into believing, as Paul put it, a gospel other than the one he had preached to them. He also calls it a perversion of the truth. It starts out with truth as its basis, but evolves into opinion and “the commandments of men.” Peter warned in **2 Peter 2:1** about false teachers introducing “**destructive heresies.**”

Space won't allow me to write as much as I want to write about this, so I'll conclude with one more reference. Paul, to Timothy in **I Timothy 1:3**, says this about the people of his time **AND US**:

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”

That time Paul warned about is **NOW**, and we need to be careful. It is important to be taught what God **SAID**, not what we wish He had said or what we think He meant when He said what He said. Truth is truth. Anything else is deception.