

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

The Nature of Deception

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 MKJV).

There's a big difference between falsehood and deception. It's been said that falsehood is 99% lie and 1% truth, while deception is 99% truth and 1% lie. How true.

If a waiter were to bring you an obvious plate of poison, would you eat it? What if it were half good food and half poison? If he were to bring you 95% good food and the remainder poison, would you eat it? Not if you knew there was poison, unless you were ignorant of the poison's lethal effects and deceived by the food's appearance and flavor.

**Deception must appear other than what it is,
containing that which is real and true.**

What if the plate was made up entirely of good food except for a smear of poison on the side? Would you eat it? You might be indignant, complain to management, walk out, and maybe sue, but you wouldn't eat the poison, seeing it there in plain sight.

Now let's say that the waiter hid it in the meal. Let's say that only 1% of the food was poison and the rest good. Would you eat it? Given you had certain reasonable assurances that such a possibility was highly unlikely, yes. How many people go to [restaurants](#) and put their faith in strangers, not for a moment fearing a poisoning, whether intentional or not? And many have been poisoned, mostly in unsuspected ways, with apparently unrelated negative results. So it is with deception. Deception wouldn't be deception unless it came deceiving. To come deceiving, it must appear other than what it is, containing that which is good and desirable, real and true.

The plotting waiter can bring poison made to look like good food, or he can bring genuine, tasty, tantalizing, nourishing food, and get you to eat the poison hidden in it. The former is a typical falsehood - 1% truth and 99% lie; the latter is a typical deception - 99% truth and 1% lie. Many think in terms of falsehood and how to avoid it. They don't often recognize deception, which is just as deadly, and they are snared.

Jesus said:

"The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10 MKJV).

Satan is the arch deceiver. He is a spiritual being, very powerful, very clever. He knows his stuff. There are those to whom he feeds poison, and they gladly eat it. Why? Because they've never known better. They are children of darkness, his slaves from birth. They'll consume any falsehood because they haven't known the truth and have no way to compare or discern the falsehood. They're walking in death.

The enemy may serve up poison little by little to have its accumulating effect on the victim.

Then there are those who won't fall for the obvious. Having tasted of the truth, they have the power to resist, in measure, no longer being entire slaves to the liar. To these, Satan must serve up some of the real thing to which they've become accustomed. Only then will they eat the hidden poison, unless God gives grace.

Now the enemy may try to serve up one massive, fatal dose of poison, or he may serve up little by little to have its accumulating effect on the victim in due time. The end is still the same. Both are disguised in the real thing; lies are hidden in truth, the counterfeit in the real. If a counterfeiter wishes to pass false currency, the logical and strategic thing to do is hide it with true currency to promote confidence and avoid suspicion.

Decades ago, the Lord commanded me to come out of all religious life and activity of the nominal Christian world, its churches particularly, and to have nothing more to do with its customs, traditions, formalities, doctrines, and systems. He informed me that a conglomeration of truth and error was destroying His people. I was to leave it all behind as my own dung.

Initially, my wife and I were led to read the Bible almost exclusively. For the most part, we have done so. Since then, from time to time, I have witnessed Christian programs, red literature, heard of great "revivals" or "moves of God," and thought, "What's wrong with what they're saying and doing? Some truths of the Bible are being preached, especially salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection. There are people converted, healed, delivered from addictive substances and habits; marriages are restored, families reunited, finances corrected, enmities quelled, tyrants removed, and people come together rejoicing and united, instead of being tormented and divided. What's wrong with that? Don't fruits speak for themselves?

"Where once was despair, now there was hope; where sadness, now joy; where taking, now giving; where hate, now love; where adultery and fornication, now fidelity and chastity; where bars, now churches; where pornography and smut, now the Bible. What can possibly be wrong with that?!"

In all those things that initially appeared to be great works of God, there was deception.

I thought, “Surely we have deceived ourselves and have become spiritual, judgmental hypocrites - separatistic, Pharisaical, self-righteous, and counterproductive to the Kingdom of Heaven - so deluded that we can’t appreciate the good and the real when they stare us in the face! Have we missed out? Lord, what has happened to us? Are You among us or not?”

Then would come the Amalekites harassing and slaying on the heels of the Israelites having doubted and said, “Is God among us or not?” (Exodus 17:7-8). With doubt came guilt, shame, turmoil, confusion, and fear. Countless times have the Amalekites troubled me.

Whether by disobedience in looking back and exposing myself to these forbidden things, or by temptations ordained of God to try me (Matthew 4:1), I have been tried and have had terrible battles. And in all those things that initially appeared to be great works of God, there was invariably deception and the ultimate exposure of those men and their works.

Doesn’t the Scripture say the man of sin will come with all power, signs, and lying wonders, working miracles and sitting as God?

2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 MKJV

(3) Let not anyone deceive you by any means. For that Day shall not come unless there first comes a falling away, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition,

(4) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the Temple of God, setting himself forth, that he is God.

(5) Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you?

(6) And now you know what holds back, for him to be revealed in his own time.

(7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he is now holding back until it comes out of the midst.

(8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming,

(9) whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

(10) and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved.

(11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie,

(12) so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned.

The elect won't fall for the obvious. They must be tried according to their stature.

Don't false ministers come in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

“And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many will come in My Name, saying, I am Christ [Jesus is Christ], and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5 MKJV).

“For such ones are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. Did not even Satan marvelously transform himself into an angel of light? Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15 MKJV).

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand). Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; nor let him in the field turn back to take his clothes” (Matthew 24:15-18 MKJV).

Didn't Jesus say deception would be such that, if possible, the very elect would be deceived?

“For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders; so much so that, if it were possible, they would deceive even the elect” (Matthew 24:24 MKJV).

How could such a thing be possible, unless the false appeared as the true? Of course, the elect won't fall for the obvious. They must be tried according to their stature. A child isn't sent to spar with an adult boxer. One doesn't give a seasoned weightlifter anything but challenging weights to lift.

In time, the truth was manifest, the deception exposed, and its power neutralized.

When is it most effective to tempt someone to eat? When he's hungry, of course. Some will eat almost anything, if hungry enough.

“The full soul despises a honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet” (Proverbs 27:7 MKJV).

In the past, we've been alone and lonely, seeking and hungering for fellowship, for tangible meaning, for the manifesting of God. We were tried, but we found our way through the

deception, by God's grace. He simply kept us, giving an inner witness and Scripture confirmation, discernment, and wisdom to know the difference between false and true. In time, the truth was manifest, the deception exposed, and its power neutralized.

In this last time, the Lord brought home a truth to me I don't recall His having done before. He showed me that deception, to be powerful and effective, had to come in a plateful of good food, that there was no other way. I hadn't understood this before; somehow I was under the mistaken impression the false appeared as true, that there was a counterfeit happening.

To be sure, such is often the case. We have many artificial things appearing as real - flowers, food, currency, make up, and wigs; the same in the spiritual. But the true essence of deception is the false **hidden *in* the true, not posing *as* the true.**

How does one know there's poison in the food, when it's hidden in food that looks so good, and not only **looks** good, but **is** good? How does one know he's not in fact refusing a plate of genuine good food from the Lord and thereby damning himself? Only by the Lord. I have mentioned that He kept us, giving us witness, confirmation, discernment, and Scriptural guidance.

Let one spend time in the Scriptures with the Lord, instead of in the words of men, no matter how famous, popular, learned, or impressive they may be. That one will be quite surprised to discover the error and how these learned men with all their titles and degrees are in much darkness, presuming to lead others into the light in the Name of the Lord (of course, the Lord must reveal the Scriptures). Deceivers and deceived falling into a ditch.

Put your trust in the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the One Who is Altogether Faithful.

Furthermore, I have learned that good and evil, truth and error can appear identical; there's no way of knowing the difference by our own judgment. It takes the grace of God to understand and be delivered from the power of deception. Satan comes as an angel of light, not of darkness; as a preacher of the Gospel, not of destruction and hopelessness; he comes as a good, not an evil, messenger.

Satan comes by men, even as the Lord comes by men. In fact, Satan savours the things that are of men and will surely please those who aren't crucified unto the world and the world unto them, those who are in the flesh and not in the Spirit. Satan comes with a call to fulfillment and enjoyment, but Jesus comes with a call to death and self-denial.

Will you discern which is which? Only by the grace and mercy of God. We are not our own saviours. Put your trust in the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the One Who is Altogether Faithful.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it, and whoever desires to lose his life for My sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:24-25 MKJV).

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