

Are You Deceived?

Russell Kemp—June 24, 2023

What I would like to talk to you today is, what I think, a very important issue: Are you deceived? I took a look at this a number of years ago, but I kind of modified it and taken a look at it when we look at the world we live in today, which is radically change. Things are getting pretty bad.

- How do you know if you're not deceived?
- How do you know?
- What does it mean to be deceived?

By Webster's Dictionary, to be deceived is to make someone believe something that's not true! So, by definition *you would believe what is false to actually be true!*

Most people who are deceived obviously do not know that they are deceived. They believe what is false *is true!*

Many years ago when I was on active duty in the Navy, I belonged to an organization called Fleet CORP-Group One. That stood for Fleet Composite Operational Readiness Group One. What that really boiled down to: it was that we did what they called 'Up Deck' or otherwise known as Operational Deception. Part of my job at that time was to deceive the enemy and make them believe what the enemy was seeing was real, when it actually was false. *This is how Satan works!* But we did that as a means of dealing with enemy problems.

What brought up this topic was listening to a talk radio show where they were actually talking about Alexia—the voice of Silicon Valley. They asked her who was Mohammad? The answer was, 'a great prophet who taught the world to worship one God.' Then they asked Alexia who was Jesus Christ? *He was described as 'a fictional character'!*

It's amazing, these responses are what they're programmed to respond. I don't own one of these things and wouldn't have it, to tell you the truth, but I would guess that they're very popular, especially among this younger generation. Think of the messages that they would convey to the population: 'Christ is just a fictional character.'

- Is that a deception? *This is exactly what Satan would want all of us to believe!*
- Who is Satan?
- What is he like?
- What does he do?
- Do we believe in God?

Revelation 12:7: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels warred against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels warred. But

they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent **who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world**; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (vs 7-9).

Notice that Satan "...**is deceiving the whole world**..." *and we are certainly part of that world!*

- Are we deceived? *If not:*
- How do we know that we're not deceived?

I think that far too many of us often don't take Satan seriously. He's just a 'cartoon character' and he's got a little red suit and has horns.

Brethren, he is real! Look at his personality and his creation, because he is a creation from God. In Ezek. 28 we get a pretty good picture of this angel that God created. Ezek. 28 talks about the king of Tyre but the description that follows makes it pretty clear that it is talking about Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12: "Son of man, lift up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You seal up the measure of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.'""

This description obviously does not fit the description of any human being. But the next verse makes it clear who we're talking about here:

Verse 13: "You have been in Eden... [with Adam and Eve] ...the Garden of God; every precious stone *was* your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the turquoise, and the emerald, and gold. The workmanship of your settings and of your sockets was prepared **in you in the day that you were created.**"

He was created, and as we continue it becomes very clear that we're really talking about Satan here.

Verse 14: "You *were* the anointed cherub that covers, and I set you so; you were upon the Holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire."

It becomes pretty clear what happened to this beautifully and wonderfully created being of God.

Verse 15: "You **were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you.**"

Finally, we see that this created being sinned

and God said:

Verse 16: “By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled your midst *with violence*, **and you have sinned. Therefore, I will cast you as profane from the mountain of God, and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from among the stones of fire.**”

Perfect, created being that sinned! He was created perfect, and he was given a position of authority and power ***until he sinned!***

Isa. 14—we get a description of what sins caused the fall of Satan, and his punishment.

Isaiah 14:12: “How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!”

Isaiah shows us how Satan’s pride, changed his entire nature. His attempted overthrow of God Himself. Notice how Satan’s pride changed his entire nature and his attempted overthrow of God Himself!

Verse 13: “For you have said in your heart, ‘I will ascend *into* the heavens, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.... [now we see Satan’s intention]: ...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High” (vs 13-14).

In other words, Satan intended to put himself in the place of God. This powerful and beautifully created being was cast to the earth and is now the ‘god of this world’! His intention is to destroy God’s Plans for His creation.

This is this great dragon that was cast down to earth with his demons that we read about in Rev. 12. this is what we are warned about in Eph. 6 when we are told:

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... [he’s powerful and we are not] ...**because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual power of wickedness in high places**” (vs 10-12).

Satan and his demons are not a cartoon joke! *He is deceptive and will do anything in his power to see that you don’t make it into God’s Kingdom! He does not want you to make it!*

1-Peter 5:8—we’re warned: “Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling

about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour.”

This isn’t a cartoon; this isn’t a joke! How does Satan go about deceiving the whole world? How does he do that? ***He lies! Satan is a liar and will say anything that makes sinning attractive to deceive you!***

Notice what Jesus said to the Pharisees; John 8:44: “You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

Notice what He did in the Garden of Eden. We know this story and are familiar with it, and we were told in Ezek. 28 that Satan was there. Notice how he distorts the Truth to Eve. Satan asked Eve if it were true that she could ‘eat of any of the trees in the Garden’?

Genesis 3:1: “Now, the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘*Is it true that God has said, “You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?”*’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, “You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ (vs 1-3). *Notice what Satan’s response was:*

Verse 4: “And the serpent said to the woman, ***‘In dying, you shall not surely die!’***” *Satan always tries to paint a positive picture of sin!*

Verse 5: “For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil.”

You will have that choice, and like most sin, eating the fruit of that tree, it offered some pretty good benefits. Besides that, it looked pretty good to eat. *So, she ate!*

Verse 6: “And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, ***she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.***”

Romans 1:22: “While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, ***they became fools.***”

When Eve was confronted by God, she recognized the deception:

Genesis 3:13: “And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What *is* this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘***The serpent deceived me, and I ate.***”

We won't get into Adam laying the blame on Eve. He did indeed learn the difference between good and evil, and she recognized her sin. Satan lies through his prophets!

I, as well as many of you, at one time belonged to a Church organization that once claimed the membership of over 140,000 people. They had wealth and resource to spread the Gospel around the world. But the leaders of that organization bit-by-bit and piece-by-piece changed the doctrines of the Church until it no longer taught the Truth—*lies!*

Those doctrines define what the Church is all about. Pretty soon God was a trinity and the Holy Spirit was person. Of course, all those laws concerning unclean meats were done away with, keeping God's Holy Days were not necessary, and does it really make any difference which day of the week that you worship God?

It was no longer the same Church that God created, except for small fragmented groups. That Church really does not exist today! Many of the smaller Churches of God today came out of this organization, and I believe that too many of the brethren worshipped the Church and it's leaders instead of God.

Church organizations are necessary, there's no doubt about that, but our focus needs to be on God, not on a leader of a Church, not on the Church itself. If you remember the booklet that they put out, *God Is*, notice Paul's warnings for the Corinthians about following false prophets.

2-Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, **so your minds might be corrupted** from the simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different gospel, which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something good*" (vs 3-4).

False prophets, being used by Satan to create deception, it's nothing new. They've been around for a long time. God spoke of this to Jeremiah concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

Jeremiah 14:14: And the LORD said to me, **'The prophets prophesy lies in My name; I did not send them, nor have I commanded them, nor did I speak to them.** They prophesy to you a false vision and a worthless divination, and a thing of no value, and the deceit of their heart."

The Apostle Peter gave a very stern warning to those who follow a false prophets, after having received the Truth.

2-Peter 2:17: "These *false prophets* are

fountains without water, clouds driven by a storm, for whom is reserved the blackest of darkness forever. For they speak bombastic *words* of vanity, enticing *others* through *the* lusts of *the* flesh by granting indulgences to sin, **and ensnaring those who had indeed escaped from those who live in deception.** While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually slaves of corruption because by whatever anyone is overcome, he is also held in bondage" (vs 17-19).

Here comes the real warning for those of us who have received the Truth of God and the knowledge of His Kingdom.

Verse 20: "For **if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,** they again become entangled in them, and are overcome, **the final end is worse than the beginning.** For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness **than, after knowing it, to turn back from the Holy commandment that was delivered to them**" (vs 20-21).

Knowing the Truth and entering into a covenant with God, turning back is not an option. You don't enter into a covenant with God and take it lightly. Satan uses men to turn brethren away from the Truth of God. Notice the warning give by Paul to the Romans:

Romans 16:17: "Now I exhort you, brethren, to take note of those who are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and shun them; because these are the sort who are not serving our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, **and are deceiving the hearts of the innocent by smooth talking and flattery**" (vs 17-18).

We need to be in the practice of studying all issues and doctrines to ensure what is true and what is false. The Church that I used to belong to kept coming up with all these 'new truths' that were *not true!* We need to follow the admonition of Paul in this letter to the Thessalonians:

1-Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things. Hold fast *to that which* is good."

1-Timothy. 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times... [Are we in the latter times?] ...**some shall apostatize from the faith, and shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.**"

2-Timothy 3:13: "But wicked men and imposters shall become worse and worse, **deceiving others and being deceived themselves.**"

Satan is the great deceiver, and he lies to make what is actually false seem to be true and

great! Satan uses the media *to make what is false seem true!* Like Donald Trump uses the term ‘fake news.’ Satan uses TV and movies to make sin appear to be rewarding. Have you ever noticed how many movies show some woman getting a divorce from her husband and she live the life of luxury afterward. She immediately moves into a gorgeous home or an expensive apartment and drives the most expensive cars available. All the men in the world just flock to her. We all know this is real, right?

How often is adultery, fornication, cheating, stealing and even killing portrayed in a positive light! We know these things aren’t real, but if you watch enough of this ‘garbage’ it begins to affect your judgment. You soon begin to partner with the actors portraying this depravity.

Take heed to the words of Paul; 1-Corinthians 15:33: **“Do not be deceived; evil companionship corrupts good behavior.”**

The same could be said about music. I like country music, but the lyrics of many of these songs concerns cheating and sex. I think about Conway Twitty and without a doubt he was an excellent singer, but most of his songs were about sex. Two of the songs that come to mind is:

1) Tight Fittin’ Jeans

It’s a song about a woman who left her husband to go spend a wild night on the town. Good music, dangerous lyrics.

2) You’ve Never Been This Far Before

I think this title gives us a pretty good idea what this is about. I love music, and I actually played the drums in a rock ‘n roll band when I was a teenager and my younger years. However, TV, movies and music affects how we think.

The same could be said about video games, some of them are horrible. I still think that much of the violence that we see in society today is the result of all this violence produced by the media. These things are deceptive and Satan uses the media to portray sin attractive and exciting.

However, this is the world that we live in, and we’re not to be apart of it. How do we keep from being deceived? *Hopefully, before being baptized we all took the time to prove all things!*

1-Thessalonians 5:21: “Prove all things. Hold fast to *that which is good.*” *If you don’t want to be deceived:*

- you need to study
- you need to meditate
- you need to pray
- ask for guidance on all matters pertaining to the Truth

What is Truth? *The Word of God* and we find that in our Bibles. The Apostle Paul makes it very clear:

2-Timothy 2:15: **“Diligently study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.”**

We will never learn and hold the Truth if we don’t prove all things. I still think that’s a lot of what was wrong with the former association. I don’t think everybody took time to *prove all things.*

We can’t just take the word of someone who gives us materials for a sermon, including me, but we prove them! Notice what Christ said to the Church of Ephesus:

Revelation 2:2: “I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil; and *that you did test those who proclaim themselves to be apostles...* [something we all need to do] ...but are not, and did find them liars.”

They tested their teachers to see if they spoke the Truth. This is attitude that we need to have to prevent being deceived.

Galatians 6:3—*Paul speaking:* “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself.... [and here comes the instructions to prevent being deceived]: ...But let each one prove his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for each one shall bear his own burden” (vs 3-5).

2-Corinthians 13:5: “Examine yourselves *to see whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves. Don’t you of your own selves know that Jesus Christ is in you? Otherwise, you are reprobates.*”

We need to take time to meditate on these things to ensure it is fully comprehended and understood.

Psalm 119:99: “I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.”

It takes time to fully incorporate all that we study and learn into our feeble brains if we are to retain what we learn. Finally, brethren, we cannot defeat the power of Satan and his demons without God. This can only be done through prayer.

Romans 12:12: “*Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer.*”

Back in Ephesians we read that we are all wrestling against principles, powers and rulers of darkness and wickedness in high places. We’re told

to put on the whole armor of God! Part of that armor is prayer:

Ephesians 6:18: “Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”

We live in Satan’s world and we need God’s protection to keep us from these deceptions. The closer we come to the end of the age, Satan is going to turn up the heat. I guarantee you that, and I think he’s doing it up now, because he does not want you or me to succeed.

He will do anything in his power to deceive you! He will use false prophets and ministers of darkness to deceive you and turn you from the Truth! Once again, Paul warns us about false prophets, or false apostles, deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. It is no

2-Corinthians 11:13^[transcriber’s correction]: “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works” (vs 13-15).

Notice the very stark warning that Paul gives us concerning about being deceived:

2-Thessalonians 2:3: “Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not come...* [the second coming of Christ] ...**unless the apostasy shall come first, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition**, the one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the Temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God” (vs 3-4).

This is the same Satan who was cast out of heaven because he wanted to be ‘God.’

Verse 5: “Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And now you understand what is holding *him* back in order for him to be revealed in his own set time. **For the mystery of lawlessness is already working**; only *there is* One Who [Christ] is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming); *even* the one whose coming is according to **the inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders**” (vs 5-9).

Verse 10: “And with all deceivableness of

unrighteousness in those who are perishing **because they did not receive the love of the Truth**, so that they might be saved. And for this cause **God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe the lie, so that all may be judged who did not believe the Truth**, but who took pleasure in unrighteousness” (vs 10-12).

Satan deceives by lies, and he’s succeeding in many ways! Brethren, Satan is real, he’s not a joke. He has the power to deceive and he will when and where he can in order to overcome and deceive the world and our hope in Christ Jesus.

James the brother of Christ gives us the answer to defeating Satan.

James 4:7: “**Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**”

Selah! Think on these things!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 12:7-9
- 2) Ezekiel 28:12-16
- 3) Isaiah 14:12-14
- 4) Ephesians 6:10-12
- 5) 1 Peter 5:8
- 6) John 8:44
- 7) Genesis 3:1-6
- 8) Romans 1:22
- 9) Genesis 3:13
- 10) 2 Corinthians 11:3-4
- 11) Jeremiah 14:14
- 12) 2 Peter 2:17-21
- 13) Romans 16:17-18
- 14) 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- 15) 1 Timothy 4:1
- 16) 2 Timothy 3:13
- 17) 1 Corinthians 15:33
- 18) 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- 19) 2 Timothy 2:15
- 20) Revelation 2:2
- 21) Galatians 6:3-5
- 22) 2 Corinthians 13:5
- 23) Psalm 119:99
- 24) Romans 12:12
- 25) Ephesians 6:18
- 26) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
- 27) 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12
- 28) James 4:7

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