

The Old Paths

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“Deceit”

Jarrod Jacobs

Deception happens daily. Some people lose their life savings because they are deceived into giving it to a crook. Others have been deceived into thinking a policeman was at the door, when in fact, it was a criminal preying on them. People are deceived spiritually when they are led to believe that any “religion” and any “religious” person pleases God. Some are deceived into thinking that so long as God “didn’t say not to” do this or that, then it is authorized. Deceit will blind men to the truth and rob men of their souls if they die in that condition.

We are warned against being deceived no less than six times in the Bible (Deut. 11:16; Lk. 21:8; I Cor. 6:9, 15:33; Gal. 6:7; I Jn. 3:7). Unfortunately, many do not heed these warnings. The deceit in the hearts of men grows and grows. In fact, Paul said, “*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*” (II Tim. 3:13). Do you want to be counted in this number?

When people today allow the theories and ideas of men to taint their understanding of the Scriptures, then they are being deceived. Friends, there are many passages in the Bible that are so simple, that a man would need help to misunderstand them! Yet, I am afraid that many are getting “help” that they do not need! Please note three common deceptions which ensnare men today.

The Theory of Evolution: The theories of men which teach that

we are descended from lower forms of life deceive many! God made this world and all living things (Gen. 1-2; Acts 17:24; Ps. 33:6-9). He made men whole, and as distinct sexes “*at the beginning*” (Matt. 19:4-6). The Bible says men were created at the beginning of the world, literally, on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26-28). Man **was not** created 6,000,000,000, 6,000,000, 6000, 60, 6 years, or even 6 months after God created the world, but on the 6th day!

Saving That All “Religious” People Are Saved: Just because one has religious fervor does not mean he is right with God. The Jews had “*a zeal toward God,*” yet Paul prayed that “*they might be saved*” (Rom. 10:1-3). He noted the Athenians were “*very religious*” because of their varied altars for worshipping many gods (Acts 17:22); but they were not saved (Acts 17:30). Religious fervor alone will not save anyone!

Justifying Actions Based Upon God’s Silence: Many false doctrines have been justified because God was silent. God’s silence does not permit action, but prohibits it! The reason Christ could not be a priest on earth was because of God’s silence (Heb. 7:12-14). Paul said whatever we do or say must be in accordance with the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17). How do we know what is authorized? We know it when we read it in God’s Book. How regularly are we reading the Bible so that we might not be deceived by men (Jn. 17:17)?

“BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP.”

Our Members Write

“...Whatever the Lord Says to Me, That Will I Speak”
Matthew Nevins, Boonville, IN

For the past semester, I have engaged in Bible studies with a few of my friends before school every Friday. As I began to participate more, I began to have concerns about what I was saying. This is an issue where several members of the Body have problems when doing personal evangelism. What do I say?

Through my personal Bible study, I came across a passage in 1 Kings 22:14. In its context, Jehoshaphat went to visit Ahab. Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to go with him to take Ramoth in Gilead from the King of Syria. Jehoshaphat answered Ahab’s question by asking him to go and inquire what the Lord has to say. Well, Ahab summoned 400 false prophets, and Jehoshaphat saw right through it (I Kings 22:6-7). He then told Ahab to call upon a real prophet of God (v. 8). Ahab didn’t want to because this prophet only spoke bad things of Ahab (v. 9). But, when called before Ahab, Micaiah said, “*As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak.*” I would like to use this statement as a theme for this article. Whatever the Lord says to me, that will I speak.

Back in the day when this event occurred, God spoke through His prophets, as His mouthpieces. However, in today’s world, God does not speak to the world through this channel of communication. Rather, He uses His Son. Hebrews 1:1-2 deals with this idea and truth. “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world...*”

Of course, the Son doesn’t speak directly to us in a formal manner, but what He has said and done has been recorded so that we may believe. (Jn. 20:30-31) Jesus is the message we should be telling others about. He is the Word which we ought to speak. By this I mean that we need to be teaching the gospel of Christ, or

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk

the good news of His coming to save the world and His promise to return. Are we ashamed of it and embarrassed to speak it to our friends? Paul wasn't, and in Romans 1:16 Paul writes to the brethren saying, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*" So the question is this: Is the Church growing? Are we preaching like we ought?

Returning to the issue of not being sure of what to say, all I can say about this is to take up courage through prayer with your Father and study! I like the KJ version in II Timothy 2:15. "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" Instead of using "study" the NKJ version uses the word "diligent," but studying is how we show our diligence as a workman for God. Are we studying as we ought?

If we do not know how to study, don't use it as an excuse. If you need help in this area, you need to consult with an older, more mature Christian whom you respect and ask them to show you some methods of studying. This is important for all Christians to grow spiritually. Studying is a must and is the only way we know for sure what we are practicing is right.

Whatever the Lord says to me, that will I speak. When we have studied what God has said, we need to follow the example of the early Christians who preached the Word wherever they went. The good news should be so paramount to us that we should be excited to a point of zeal that will motivate us to share it with anyone outside the body of Christ. Let's look at the example left for us in Acts 8:4: "*Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.*" This verse occurs after the stoning of Stephen, and Saul is now persecuting the Christians. In the face of persecution, the Christians preached the gospel of Christ. We are not in a time where we are persecuted for what we believe in like those of the first century church. In times like that, that is when the Church was growing the most. Why isn't the Church growing like it should be? There are no excuses we can use

except that we aren't teaching as we ought. The Lord's body isn't on fire like it could be. There are members who are teaching, but a couple isn't enough. There needs to be participation by everyone. I feel like the Body is beginning to light up again, but we all need to be out there teaching the truth together. The Christians in Acts 8:4 were working together and were encouraged by everyone's participation. Let's engage in the same zeal that they had.

Still some may say that they are not confident in speaking the truth to their friends. That's when each and every one of us needs to evaluate why we aren't. Are our attitudes in the wrong place? We are not speaking our own word but God's. That's what the Scripture is. II Timothy 3:16 says, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...*" The Bible was written by about 40 men, but God instructed them what to write. This is incredibly important for us to accept. If this was a book about a group of men's opinions, then what these men said could be just as good as another group of men's opinions. This NOT the case. God, a perfect being, has given us His Word so that we may be able to live with Him in eternity.

In verse 17 we find this: "*That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" We need to equip ourselves with the Scriptures. This should give us confidence. Why? Because within the Scriptures is a promise of Heaven for those who are faithful in this life. We need to tell everyone of this so that they may have an opportunity to make their life right with

God.

Not everyone will respond to the word the same. This is evident in the parable of the Sower. This is found in Matthew 13:3-8; 18-23. Here, Christ describes four types of ground: wayside, thorny, stony, and the good ground. Each group received the seed in a different way. The same is true of people. Not everyone will receive the gospel like the Bereans and obey God's call. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, "*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many that go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*" The point that I want to make with this passage is this: few will go by the narrow way, God's way. Still, we have the responsibility of sowing the seed, which is what we get from the Sower. Not everyone will accept God's word, but we still need to sow it because there is good ground everywhere.

It is up to us to spread the gospel. The apostles received the command from Jesus to preach throughout the world. Let us take the same challenge and share the good news with our peers. We are all not preachers, but we can still share the good news. Some have more talent than others, but each of us has the ability to bring them to services or to a Bible study in private. There are a number of people in this congregation who would be willing to help in this manner. Utilize the tools you can. We all need to improve in this area. Let us not stop until Jesus comes to take us home.

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