

Destruction of Christians

Satan's ultimate goal is the destruction of Christianity and in the process destroying every person confessing Jesus Christ of Nazareth as their Lord and Savior. What will he use to destroy God's people knowing that God warned His children that deception will be the weapon he will be using?

1.1.1. Legal Grounds

When God led the Israelites into the promised land of Canaan He made one thing very clear (Ezekiel 44:23):

"The priests shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the common or profane, and cause them to distinguish between the unclean and the clean."

Very few Christians today have any knowledge of those things that the Lord proclaims to be unclean. Thus, their lives and homes are cluttered with unclean things which enable deception to operate in their lives. Moses taught the Israelites the difference between the holy and the unholy and this knowledge enabled them to know which things would bring blessing and which things would bring cursing into their lives. Clearly, whether one's life is successful and blessed, or unsuccessful and cursed, depends upon the knowledge of the teachings of the Lord.

Satan can only gain access to a Christian, to torment and oppress him, when he has been given a legal right in a Christian's life. This right is obtained via un-confessed sin in a person's life. However this sin could stretch back generations and still have an influence or effect on the person, his life and his circumstances.

Sin, transgression and iniquity work together to influence the future of the generations. Exodus 34:7 states that God keeps "... mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation"; Numbers 14:18 tells us that "*The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.*"

What is the difference between sin, transgression and iniquity?

- Sin¹

The English word for sin is derived from archery. The archer would draw the bow and shoot the arrow towards the target. If he missed the mark, the overseeing official would yell "sin." The Hebrew meaning of sin is:

- Slipping away from where you should be;
- Erring from the path on which God has put you;
- Not achieving a standard that God has set;
- Missing the road or the mark or path;

¹ <http://www.members.aol.com/yadadocs/lessons/transgression1.htm>

The Greek meaning of sin is:

- Missing the mark; an act of disobedience to the divine Lord.

- Transgression²

The Hebrew meaning of transgression is a wilful deviation from, and therefore rebellion against, the path of godly living. The Greek meaning of transgression is:

- To go beyond; Overstepping the limits.

This word very strongly links with rebellion and disobedience. Transgressions are more potent than just sinning and are the next step into further permanent bondage. Transgressions are related to trespass, which is a wilful violation of the law (human or Godly law).

- Iniquity³

The Hebrew meaning is:

- perverseness, bowed down, twisted;
- to be bent or crooked;
- to be wrung out of course.

Drake's Annotated Bible states that iniquities "... signifies not merely that which is wrong, but the tendency to do wrong. This inclination lies in the disposition and nature and not merely in an act of transgression of the law." Iniquities are second nature sins, which drive us to repeatedly, continually to commit sin. God himself states in Exodus 20:5 that He is a "... jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation". Iniquities can be associated with bloodline sins; the tendencies running down the bloodline from one generation to the next generation due to un-confessed sin and transgressions of the forefathers. Therefore creating a twisting, preventing us to go the right way, perverting the truth, which leads to error and perversion of intents, which affects one's will.

Iniquity is a residual consequence of sin that affects not only the one sinning, but also the offspring of the sinner. Iniquity is driven by a condition of the heart (hate, rebellion, bitterness etc.), an inner tendency of man to be disobedient to God. It is hidden sin within our lives – inward – not exposed, yet guilty before God. Iniquity involves lawlessness, wickedness, unrighteousness, transgression and perversion.⁴

Joshua 7 provides us with an account as to how Satan gains the legal right to assault the Israelites even though they personally might be unaware of his devices.

Legal ground in a Christian's life can be generated from several sources, among others⁵:

- Inheritance resulting from sins of the fathers, broken covenants, and curses;
- Involvement with the unclean and unholy things including objects in our home, honor to gods other than God Almighty and following demonic fads;

² <http://www.members.aol.com/yadadocs/lessons/transgression1.htm>

³ <http://www.members.aol.com/yadadocs/lessons/transgression1.htm>

⁴ Buys, 1990, pp. 18-19

⁵ Brown, 1987, pp. 18-19

- Violation of territorial rights, living on unclean land or in an unclean house;
- Performance of demonic rituals;
- Distinct situations and actions including ridiculing Satan, hatred, jealousy, breaking vows to God, etc.

1.1.2. Deception

Christians need clear understanding as to Satan's deceptive workings, to enable them to pass through the trails and tribulations of the last days.

Luke warns us to be ready for the things to come (Luke 21:34-36):

"But take heed to yourselves and be on your guard, lest your hearts be overburdened and depressed (weighed down) with the giddiness and headache and nausea of self-indulgence, drunkenness, and worldly worries and cares pertaining to [the business of] this life, and [lest] that day come upon you suddenly like a trap or a noose; For it will come upon all who live upon the face of the entire earth. Keep awake then and watch at all times [be discreet, attentive, and ready], praying that you may have the full strength and ability and be accounted worthy to escape all these things [taken together] that will take place, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man."

The days ahead might be difficult and challenging but the Lord promises His children that His guidance and protection will be with them if His voice is adhered to (Revelation 3:10):

"Because you have guarded and kept My word of patient endurance [have held fast the lesson of My patience with the expectant endurance that I give you], I also will keep you [safe] from the hour of trial (testing) which is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell upon the earth."

One of the many lies of Satan is that honest seekers after God can not be deceived. Many of those believing this lie throughout time have been deceived by lying spirits counterfeiting the workings of God. Among such, lying spirits have sometimes worked on their determinations literally to obey the Scriptures, and by misuse of the letter of the written Word have pushed them into unbalanced truth, with resulting erroneous practices. Many who have suffered for their strict adherence to these Biblical commands firmly believe that they are martyrs for Christ. 2 Timothy 2:26 teaches that Satan keeps Christians from doing God's will if they are ignorant of his devices:

"... that they may come to their senses [and] escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, [henceforth] to do His [God's] will."

Having a true motive and being faithful to God is not sufficient safeguard against deception. Christians can be deceived by Satan and his followers for the following reasons:⁶

- When a man becomes a child of God by the regenerating power of the Spirit, giving him new life as he trusts in the atoning work of Christ, he does not at the same time receive fullness of knowledge, either about God, himself or Satan.
- The mind, which by nature is darkened (Ephesians 4:18) and under a veil created by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4), is only renewed, and the veil destroyed, up to the extent that the light of truth penetrates it, and according to the measure in which the man is able to apprehend it.
- Deception has to do with the mind, and by definition is the result of a thought being admitted to the mind under the erroneous assumption that it is truth. Since deception is based on ignorance, and not on one's

⁶ Penn-Lewis, 2004, pp. 59-62

moral character, a Christian who is true and faithful up to the knowledge he has, is open to deception in the spheres where he is ignorant (2 Corinthians 2:11).

- The thought that God will protect a believer from being deceived if he is true and faithful is in itself a deception, because it throws a man off guard and ignores the fact that there are conditions on the part of the believer which have to be fulfilled for God's working. God does not do anything instead of a man, but by the man's cooperation with him; neither does He undertake to make up for a man's ignorance, when He has already provided knowledge for him which will prevent him from being deceived.
- Christ would not have warned his disciples to take heed not to be deceived, if there had been no danger of deception, or if God had undertaken to keep them from deception apart from their taking heed and their knowledge of such danger.

In light of the existence of deceiving spirits and their methods of deception, close examination is needed of modern theories, conceptions and expressions concerning things in connection with God and His way of working in man.

Numerous accounts of deceptions exist in the Bible:

- David was deceived by Satan into numbering Israel because he failed to recognize that the suggestion to his mind was from a satanic source (1 Chronicles 21:1).
- Job and the messengers that came to him were deceived, when they believed the report that the fire which had fallen from heaven, was from God (Job 1:16).
- A number of the people of Israel, through contact with others under satanic power, were deceived in communicating with familiar spirits and into the using of divination and other kindred arts inculcated by the powers of darkness, even though they knew the laws of God and had seen His manifested judgments among them (Leviticus 17:7; 19:31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:10-11).

War is the key word of the Apocalypse: war on the scale undreamed of by mortal man; war between angelic powers of light and darkness; war by the dragon, the beast and the deceiving world powers upon the saints; war by the same world powers against the Lamb; war by the dragon upon the Church; war in many places and forms, until the end when the Lamb overcomes, and they also overcome who are with Him, "called and chosen and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

The world is now drawing nearer to the time of the end characterized by the deception depicted in the Apocalypse as being worldwide – when there will be deception both of nations and individuals, on such a vast scale that Satan (as the deceiver) will practically have the whole earth under his control. Before this climax is reached there will be preliminary stages of the deceiver's working, marked by the widespread deception of individuals both within and outside of the professing Church.

Why and how will Satan be able to produce this worldwide deception which will permit the supernatural powers to carry out their will and drive nations and men into active rebellion against God? If Satan is described in the apocalypse as the deceiver of the whole earth, he has been so from the beginning. 1 John 5:19 says "*We know [positively] that we are of God, and the whole world [around us] is under the power of the evil one.*" John

describes the world as already lying deep in darkness through the deception of the evil one, Satan, and being blindly led through vast evil spirit hosts under his control.

Every unregenerate man is first of all deceived by his own deceitful heart (Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 44:20) and by sin (Hebrews 3:13). Then Satan adds the blinding of the mind. Only the truth of the Word (Bible) can dispell the darkness when the regenerating life of God reaches the person. For this blinding of the mind is removed only so far as the deceptive lies of Satan are uprooted by the light of truth.

This power of Satan to blind the mind is exposed when a person is deceived when⁷:

- He is a hearer but not a doer of the Word of God (James 1:22);
- He says he has no sin (1 John 1:8);
- He thinks himself to be something when he is nothing (Galatians 6:3);
- He thinks himself to be wise with the wisdom of this world (James 1:26);
- He seems to be religious when an unbridled tongue reveals his true condition (James 1:26);
- He thinks he can sow and not reap what he sows (Galatians 6:7);
- He thinks the unrighteous will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9);
- He thinks that contact with sin will not have an effect upon him (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Satan works with a clear strategy, in wiles of error and deception concerning the things of God (Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:3,13-15). Satan manufacture to beguile each person in a way fitting to the particular stage of his spiritual life: unregenerate, carnal Christian or spiritual believer. Jesus warns us in the following passages:

- Matthew 24:4-5
“Jesus answered them, Be careful that no one misleads you [deceiving you and leading you into error]. For many will come in (on the strength of) My name [appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead many astray.”
- Matthew 24:11;24
“And many false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead many into error... For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and they will show great signs and wonders so as to deceive and lead astray, if possible, even the elect (God's chosen ones).”

Satan and his followers will mix their counterfeits with the true manifestations of the Spirit of God, leaving a fine line between lie and truth. The Lord warns that men will be deceived concerning:

- Christ and His appearing;
- Prophecy – teachings regarding the future, from the spiritual world through inspired messengers;
- Giving of proofs that the teachings are truly of God, by signs and wonders so Godlike as to be indistinguishable from the true even by those described as the elect.

We will need to have some other form of test than the judging by appearance of a sign being from God, if we are to be able to discern the false from the truth. Satan wants to deceive us and draw us away from the path of simple faith in Christ. But He gave us His Holy Spirit, to guide us, correct us and comfort us. The secret lies in

⁷ Penn-Lewis, 2004, pp. 14-25

firstly knowing His Word (Bible), secondly knowing His voice (the small, still voice of the Holy Spirit) and to discern it from the enemies voice and thirdly to have a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

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