

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.* Hebrews 12:12-13

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## DECEPTION

*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.* 2Thessalonians 2:10-11

The human body is most fearfully and wonderfully made. The built in defense mechanisms against disease and infection, which the LORD put within our bodies when HE designed and made them are astounding. The white corpuscles of our blood are like a swarm of hornets descending on whatever infection that might start to invade there. The lymph system is another line of defense which is put in place to guard against infections of one type or another. Then there are various glands and organs designed primarily to defend our bodies against these attacks as well. The value of many of these defense mechanisms were not fully realized in time past and some of them (such as tonsils, adenoids, and the appendix) were routinely removed. Generally, a healthy body is able to ward off just about any malady which may come against it as long as those defense mechanisms are functioning properly. Of course proper nutrition and exercise are necessary to insure their proper function and that too is a part of GOD's glorious design. (see I Tim. 4:8;5:23; Dan.1:8-20)

Now while the LORD saw fit to provide our bodies with natural mechanisms against the destructive power of fleshly diseases HE did not see fit to give us a natural mechanism against deception. Rather it seems from the scripture that HE created us, according to HIS own glorious purpose and design, with an inclination towards darkness and a decided susceptibility to deception. So it is not any surprise that man in his natural state will embrace sin and darkness and will gladly believe a lie rather than the truth. In fact if the LORD does not restrain and prevent him from it, every man will (by nature) seek out the pathway of his own destruction, even though he may see others destroying themselves in the same way. Nor will any multitude of warnings of impending doom keep him back from this inevitable journey to the abyss of darkness and devastation. Not only will he go this way but he will do it gladly. *"Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."* (Rom 1:32)

The devil has been set loose in the earth (according to GOD's purpose) as the "father of lies" (see John 8:44) and he goes about seeking whom he may devour, (see I Pet. 5:8), easily finding many willing subjects. In the garden of Eden, the serpent deceived Eve who then easily persuaded Adam to willingly disobey the clear commandment of the LORD. (see I Tim.2:14; II Cor,11:3) Though this sin was gladly entered into by Adam, make no mistake that its beginning was crafted in subtlety and deceit brought about by him who was a liar from the beginning and presently lies in wait to deceive others. *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."* (2Co 11:14) Deception and its fruit is as much a part of the condemnation of men as the fact that they willingly embrace the sinful desires of their flesh. Because men cannot see clearly and are easily deluded is no excuse before GOD as we can see by what happened in the garden of Eden as man was banished from it.

The LORD JESUS said that even the elect would be deceived and destroyed *"if it were possible"*. (see Mat.24:24) Now it is quite obvious that some of the elect can be and are

deceived about many things from time to time. Practically all doctrinal error begins by some sort of deception, if not on the part of the teacher then on the part of the hearers. Peter was deceived concerning the extent of the error of the Judaizers, as were some of the Galatians. What is not possible, is that they should ever be ultimately deceived about who CHRIST is or doubt HIS all sufficiency. Now while we are certain that none of the elect shall ever perish we are confronted with many warnings in the scripture, even from the lips of our LORD, concerning the dangers of those whose purpose it is to deceive the sons of GOD.

Some glibly approach these exhortations with a casual reading as if there really is no danger present. Yet the earnest exhortations of the apostles, Paul and Peter, to "beware" must not fall on deaf ears nor should the people of GOD go whistling in the dark as if there were no dangers on the right hand and the left. Just as surely as HE has ordained that "we shall never perish", HE has also ordained the means whereby we should be redeemed by CHRIST. As a result of that redemption, HE has wrought in us "a love of the truth" and has ordained the means whereby HIS SPIRIT shall lead us into all truth that we might not be ultimately deceived even as others who have not been given this privilege. So are we to sit on the couch and receive every wind of doctrine as though it can do us no harm? Absolutely not! *"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* (Eph 5:15-16) *"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."* (2Pet 3:17) Only a fool or those who have no love of the truth can fall into this trap of a licentious attitude towards the true dangers of deception. We must be mindful that the largest deviations from truth often begin with the smallest error which oft times is almost imperceptible. GOD's children yearn to never be overtaken in anything that would bring dishonor to CHRIST. Who are those deceivers of which we must beware?

**Satan who is the master deceiver.** The scripture plainly indicates that deception is the chief tool the devil uses in devouring men. According to GOD's purpose, he is the originator of it and was the first to use it against men. He goes about seeking those he is able to deceive through the spreading of falsehoods which men by nature ignorantly receive.

**False prophets and teachers of lies.** *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."* (2Pet. 2:1-2) Though satan is the master deceiver, he most often sends forth his messengers clothed in the garments of those who seem to speak truth. (see II Cor.11:14) Multitudes gladly receive their message and many who call themselves Christians shall be deluded by them. Apart from the mercy and grace of GOD, we should all be overtaken in their damnable lies and heresies which are a judgement of GOD upon all of those who have not received a love of the truth. The LORD sends these strong delusions that false brethren may be overtaken in them, even to the point of denying the redemptive work of our SAVIOR. *"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."* ((Heb 10:26) When a man has denied the sufficiency of CHRIST's redemptive work, he is left with no redemption.

**Our own selves.** Perhaps our biggest enemy is that old man (the flesh) which wars against the SPIRIT and would bring us again into bondage if he could. *"Let no man deceive himself."* (1Co 3:18) How often are we admonished to set a watch upon our hearts, to bring our bodies into subjection, and to guard our minds. Paul said it quite well, *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* (1Co 9:24-27)