

# 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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## THE ONLY GUARD AGAINST DECEIT

*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

*II Timothy 3:13*

The potential to be deceived is a very pervasive flaw which is present in all men. Unless the LORD is pleased to keep a man from it, all shall fall prey to it. Even the very elect of GOD are not exempt from it, apart from the preservation with which the LORD keeps them. *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."* (Mat 24:24) *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen"* (Jud 1:24-25)

In order to fulfill HIS purpose and to demonstrate the utter fallibility and wickedness of men the LORD has ordered that deceptions be loosed in the earth. One needs look no further than the Garden of Eden to see this demonstrated, as Eve was deceived and Adam embraced her sin. GOD is the FIRST CAUSE of all things since nothing can occur without HIS directive. HE sends men strong delusions that they might believe lies. (see II Thes.2:11) HE sends lying spirits into false prophets in order to fulfill HIS purpose in the destruction of those HE is pleased to destroy. (see I Kgs.22:23) None shall escape who HE is pleased to blind to the truth. (see Ezek.14:9; Isa.6:10; 66:4; John 12:39-43; Job 12:16)

Satan cannot help but fulfill the purpose of GOD with every move he makes even though he personally despises every iota of that which would bring glory to GOD. He is sent forth into the earth as a deceiver and the father of lies and is busy using that power he has been given to keep men in darkness. (see Rev.12:9; I Pet.5:8) *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* (Heb 2:14-15)

Satan has assembled a great host in the earth whose primary purpose is to deceive others even while they themselves are deceived as Paul wrote to Timothy in the text we began with. *"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."* (2Thess 2:9-10) There are multitudes of religious men who fall into this category. *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."* (2Ti 3:5-8)

However the greatest deceiver and enemy to truth that we will ever face is our own wicked flesh. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jer 17:9) When all others are telling us the truth, our own sinful flesh will whisper words of deception and outright lies in our ears. Our own flesh will deceive us; degrade us, and if it

were possible destroy us. Is it not this sinful flesh that would make excuses for our sin, and have us to think lightly of it? Then it will turn right around and condemn and berate us for that which it encouraged us to allow. Is it any wonder that Paul cried out, *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* (Rom 7:24)

We are convinced that Paul was absolutely right when he said, *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.”* (Rom 7:18) And we agree with David as he declared, *“My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.”* (Psa 38:5-8)

So how can a man know whether or not he is deceived in those things which he would lay claim to believing? The simple answer is he can't. Men are so prone to err and so likely to be deceived that there is only one sure guard against deceit. That is quite simply the grace of GOD which will preserve HIS own until the day when HE is pleased to come and gather them to HIMSELF from the four corners of the earth.

HE has clearly said *“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious:”* (1Pet 2:6-7) In quoting this same passage in the book of Romans Paul uses the word “ashamed” instead of confounded. We can conclude that that man who has no confidence in his flesh or any thing other than the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST cannot be deceived in either his confidence or his doctrine.

The deceptions that arise are always those which either minimize what CHRIST has done or those which would add things to it that men can perform. The Gospel is CHRIST. It is not CHRIST plus something. It is not something less than CHRIST. More than CHRIST is too much and less than CHRIST is not enough. It is no wonder that Paul said, *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”* (Gal 6:14) The man who honestly believes that cannot be deceived.

He wrote this because the Judaizers were trying to tell the Galatian believers that they needed to add some activity of their own to that which CHRIST had done in order to be found pleasing in the eyes of GOD. In their case it was the circumcision of the flesh and a general requirement to keep the law.

The descendants of these same “Judaizers” are still with us today and tell us we must add all sorts of things, whether it be tithing, Sabbath keeping, dress codes, holy living, water baptisms, good deeds, soul winning, avoiding tobacco and alcohol, etc. These conditionalists assure men that they can enjoy the blessings of GOD IF they are obedient. They make the blessings of GOD to be earned rather than the product of HIS grace. These are all deceptions from which a man cannot escape except the LORD deliver him.

These Judaizing deceivers are somewhat more subtle than those who would say that CHRIST did not really need to die for sinners. They are much more dangerous because of that subtlety. Those who know themselves to be sinners know they need someone to bear the load of their guilt. It is the *“deceivableness of unrighteousness”* that would convince the unsuspecting that it is possible that they could in some measure add something to that which CHRIST has already absolutely finished and fulfilled. That man who has no other hope nor form of righteousness than JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS cannot be deceived.

Mercy speaks by Jesus' blood; Hear and sing, ye sons of God;  
Justice satisfied indeed; Christ has full atonement made.  
Jesus' blood speaks loud and sweet; Here all Deity can meet,  
And, without a jarring voice, Welcome Zion to rejoice.  
Should the law against her roar, Jesus' blood still speaks with power,  
“All her debts were cast on me, And she must and shall go free.”

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