

Behold I and the Children God Has Given Me

By Michael Clark and George Davis

Are you persecuted and mocked when you point out the errors and false teachings in today's church? Remember, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:12-13 KJ2000).

The time we live in is filled with all kinds of evil and often it masquerades as something good, coming from God. Paul warned Timothy, "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits, and doctrines of demons; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1-2). He went on to warn the church in Corinth about deceitful workers and false apostles:

For such men are false Apostles, workers of deceit, making themselves seem like Apostles of Christ. And it is no wonder; for even Satan himself is able to take the form of an angel of light. So it is no great thing if his servants make themselves seem to be servants of righteousness; whose end will be the reward of their works. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15 BBE)

It's no coincidence that workers of deceit in the church cling to lofty titles like "apostle, chief apostle, presiding apostle, prophet, prophet to the church, prophet to the nations, evangelist, tele-evangelist," etc. The greater the spiritual nakedness, the more they use titles to cover that nakedness. Notice that as he matured, Paul chose ever lower and more demeaning titles like "chief of sinners." Though he admitted he was an apostle, he wrote, "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:9 KJ2000).

So where is our safety from these workers who lie in wait to deceive the church? Do you know our Lord's voice? When you hear it, do you obey? For deceit to work there must be something within us that can be deceived. Jesus said with great confidence, "And when he [the Good Shepherd] puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:4-5 KJ2000).

What is the voice of strangers? How do we identify the voice of strangers? How do we differentiate that voice from the voice of the Good Shepherd?

When the devil was tempting Him to use His power for selfish gain, Jesus said, "[Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.](#)" Do we eat from the words of our God and Shepherd or do we feed on what comes from the mouths of strangers? The Greek word for strangers is allotrios, which means; 1) belonging to another, 2) foreign, strange, not of one's own family, alien, and enemy.

It took me (Michael) many years and a lot of dying to my own agendas to reach the place where I could tell the difference between His voice and the voices of those who did not speak for my Shepherd--those foreign to Him, not of His family, and those who belong to another.

Herein is the problem in much of the church today--a plethora of voices that are not the voice of the Shepherd. Just because a man can quote scripture does not mean that he speaks the words the Shepherd wants you to hear. Remember Satan's words to Jesus while tempting Him to commit suicide? "[If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down: for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone.'](#)" Satan quoted from the book of Psalms! But Jesus knew that this was not the voice of the Father, for in Him alone He lived and moved and had His being, as should we.

In 1 Kings Elijah called for a drought in the land of Israel, and he had to move out of the country and live with a widow woman. God used him to make sure that her household never ran out of food during the ensuing famine as the prophet lived with her and her son. At the end of that period, her son died and God used Elijah to pray him back to life. The woman said a most curious thing about this great miracle, "[Surely you are a man of God and by this I know that the word of God in your mouth is truth.](#)" If the word of God in the mouth of Elijah was truth, then doesn't it stand to reason that the word of God in the mouth of "another (a spiritual stranger among His sheep)" is a lie?

Dear saints, this is a hard lesson to learn. As babes we tend to submit to all those in the church who have seats of authority--those who have risen up over us. Yet Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus, "[For I know this, that after my departing](#)

shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31 KJ2000- emphasis added).

The Nature of Our Current Deception - Signs and Wonders

While writing about Jesus and His called out ones, the church, the writer of Hebrews quoted David and Isaiah:

For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto you. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children whom God has given me. (Hebrews 2:11-13 KJ2000)

Jesus sanctified us through His shed blood on the cross, and we who are sanctified by faith in Him and His finished work are all one and He calls us brethren. God has given us to Christ as the Father's children and His brothers and sisters. What a wonderful place we have in Father's eternal plan! He not only exalts Jesus above the angels, but calls us to be there with Him.

Let us look closer at this passage in Isaiah mentioned above in Hebrews, "*Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and wonders [that are to take place] in Israel from the Lord of hosts, Who dwells on Mount Zion*" (Isaiah 8:18 AMP). Both Jesus and the children of God whom the Father has given unto Him are for signs and wonders! This unit called the "body of Christ," the Israel of God (see Galatians 6:15-16) is what Father has given the world in these last days as a sign and a wonder. Yet where do so many go to seek a sign among this evil and perverse generation? They seek signs and wonders performed by men who stand above all others in the congregation, strutting their mystical powers!

When the Jews demanded a sign from Jesus, He warned them, "*An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah*" (Matthew 12:39 KJ2000). To seek signs and wonders and the men who perform them in various auditoriums across Christendom is not only evil, but it is spiritual adultery. We are giving our hearts to another that is not Jesus. We are not

looking for the sign that Father has given the world; Jesus and the children whom God has given Him which form the living body of Christ. It is spiritual adultery when we do not seek Christ as the only Head and rightfully discern His body.

The context of Isaiah 8:18 is most important. Look at the following verses closely.

"And when the people [instead of putting their trust in God] shall say to you, Consult for direction mediums and wizards who chirp and mutter, should not a people seek and consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? [Direct such people] to the teaching and to the testimony! If their teachings are not in accord with this word, it is surely because there is no dawn and no morning for them" (Isaiah 8:19-20 AMP).

The testimony of Jesus Christ is a sign and a wonder, "[Behold I and the children you have given me.](#)" Jesus came to establish a body in which He could continue to dwell among men and manifest His will. "[Therefore when he comes into the world, he says, 'Sacrifice and offering you desired not, but a body have you prepared me'](#)" (Hebrews 10:5 KJ2000).

Instead of putting their trust in God and seeking His Christ who alone is the Wonderful Counselor, many Christians today put their trust in men. Instead of seeking the headship of Jesus on whose shoulders is all church government, they look for human leaders who know no brokenness in their lives. Do they ask the Prince of Peace to make peace among them? No, they go to men who cry, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. They consult "recognized prophets" who give them personal prophecies. Such wonder workers are more than willing to give them signs and wonders since they teach perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves as they make merchandise of them. Paul warned the church that this evil would come upon the church (as did John in 1 John 2:18) and it was already underway by the close of the first century.

There Are Already Many Antichrists

Many are waiting for the temple to be built again in Jerusalem so the Antichrist can sit on a throne there before Jesus returns. This is a perverted understanding of what the passage actually says. He first comes in among the church, the true temple of God. So how does antichrist come in the church?

The coming [of the lawless one, the antichrist] is through the activity and working of Satan and will be attended by great power and with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels--[all of them] lying wonders-- And by unlimited seduction to evil and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing (going to perdition) because they did not welcome the Truth but refused to love it that they might be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a misleading influence, a working of error and a strong delusion to make them believe what is false, In order that all may be judged and condemned who did not believe in [who refused to adhere to, trust in, and rely on] the Truth, but [instead] took pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 AMP)

As the Head of that body (the Shepherd guiding His sheep), Jesus commands it and leads it. The Logos of God has never stopped speaking. But the thief has come in among the body to kill and destroy the relationship between the Shepherd and His sheep by deluding them with lying signs and wonders and great swelling words. We are in a day of unlimited seduction of the saints of God. Believe us, it is possible for the very elect to be deceived, if they do not cling to, rely on and trust in Jesus, the Truth, that they might be saved.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." We are making choices at this time that will affect our eternity. On the one side is Satan, the prince of lies and deception, and on the other side is Jesus, the Spirit of Truth. Who we listen to will be determined by what we hold dear in our hearts. Remember Jeremiah's words, "*The heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. Who can know it?*" Do we long to have power and authority in the church, usurping Jesus of His proper place? So did Satan! "*How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, who did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the farthest sides of the north*" (Isaiah 14:12-13 KJ2000- emphasis added).

How about money and financial gain? Do you have one eye on that and one eye on your calling in Christ? Sorry, you will lose. Jesus said, "*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth*" (Matthew 6:24 NASB).

Do we really desire the things that God desires or do we harbor some hidden lust deep in our hearts and seek a way to have it fulfilled, taking pleasure in unrighteousness? This is not a time to try running a con on God. He looks on the heart and so does Satan. We can either ask God to purge us from all unrighteousness and expose every hidden lust and agenda in us, or we can be seduced by Satan as he uses our inward, sinful propensities like a judo master, throwing us with our forward momentum. Remember, it is the pure in heart who see God as He is (See Matthew 5:8).

But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matthew 6:23 KJ2000)

Can we say with Jesus, "The prince of this world is come and has found nothing in me"? We need to be praying as David did, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24 KJ2000). When he was caught in a severe delusion and he killed another man so he could take the man's wife after committing adultery with her, David was confronted by God and repented.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will return to thee.* (Psalms 51:2-13 RSVA- emphasis added)

God desires truth in our inward being. He needs to put His wisdom in the secret places of our heart. A true godly fear within is the beginning of that wisdom. Is your sin ever before you so that you cry out to Him to be cleansed of all unrighteousness? Or have you hardened your heart against His convicting power, choosing rather the pleasures of sin? God wants to give us a totally new heart that is aligned with Him and the desires

of His heart. He desires to put His right Spirit within us and only as we dwell in that Spirit will our motives be pure in His sight.

Too many set out to do the works of God without first attending to His business within them. We see these falling into all manner of sexual sins, false teachings, the love of wealth (prosperity) and delusions. Remember, those who will not receive the love of His truth within, but rather take pleasure in unrighteousness will be given a lie to believe. ["Therefore God sends upon them a misleading influence, a working of error and a strong delusion to make them believe what is false, In order that all may be judged and condemned" \(II Thessalonians 2\).](#)

Be careful who you follow. Even Paul the apostle did not demand unwavering and unquestioned authority over the church. He told the saints of God that they were only to follow him just as he followed Christ. He praised the Buriens for searching the scriptures to see if what he was teaching was the truth. Those who walk in the light do not need to use deception and coercion to get people to believe what they are teaching. John wrote about Jesus, ["In Him was life and the life was the light of men."](#) The question is, do those who would lead us and demand our submission and our resources have His life and light?

We look for body life among the saints of God as they are attached to the Head from whom comes all life and light. When body life in the Son is manifest, this is the sign and wonder that Father has given the world as a testimony that the kingdom of heaven has come down among men. Satan has done and will continue to do all he can to make sure that we do not have this vision. He will do his damndest to make sure it never happens. He does not fear charlatans who do their "miraculous signs and wonders" on a stage. He knows that the world sees right through them. The world waits for something else, ["For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God" \(Romans 8:19 KJ2000\).](#)

[And they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him. Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not. \(Malachi 3:17-18 KJ2000\)](#)