

# Systematized Deception

By George Davis and Michael Clark

According to Jesus, everyone who is born of the Spirit is like the wind (John 3:8), not subject to systematic control, but into the flow of the Spirit. In countless verbal and practical ways, religion daily declares Christ's teaching here to be false, instead teaching that adherence to rigid denominational teaching is the only safe way to avoid deception.

## Growing Up Into Him vs the Systematizing of Deception

In Ephesians 4:14 and 15, Paul sets forth a contrast of truth and deception. Truth is represented by the following words, "...[that] you may grow up into [e*is*] him in all things." Deception is described by the words, "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive." The words, "by which they lie in wait to deceive" take on an entirely different meaning in the Wescott-Hort Interlinear.

[TOWARD] [THE] [WITH-WAY (systematizing)] [OF-THE] [STRAYING (deception)]  
(Ephesians 4:14 Westcott-Hort)

Ephesians 4:14 would more correctly read, "so that we may no longer be minors, tossed to and fro and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception."

Darby translates this passage similarly.

...in order that we may be no longer babes, tossed and carried about by every wind of \*that\* teaching which is in the sleight of men, in unprincipled cunning with a view to systematized error. (Ephesians 4:14 Darby)

Vincent's Word Studies captures the entire thought in two words, "Error organizes." The King James rendition, "lie in wait," is represented in the Greek text by the compound word *methodeia*, which means "a deliberate planning or system." Our word "method" comes from this Greek word.

Kittel comments, "It first has the sense 'to treat methodically, to handle according to plan. . .'" Through 1900 years of ecclesiastical conditioning, we have come to view

order as a key component of truth. Along with the extra-biblical axiom of "cleanliness is next to godliness" we have placed "orderliness is next to godliness." We often hear that God is not the author of confusion, but error and deception are not random or chaotic. In fact, organization is the chief power of deception.

According to Jesus, everyone who is born of the Spirit is like the wind (John 3:8), not subject to systematic control, but into the flow of the Spirit. In countless verbal and practical ways, religion daily declares Christ's teaching here to be false, instead teaching that adherence to rigid denominational teaching is the only safe way to avoid deception.

Order is no indicator of truth. In fact, deception is more structured than truth. Russia under Stalin and Germany under Hitler had rigid order and systematic teaching under the systems of Communism and Nazism. Both claimed to exist for the good of the collective masses.

Error always organizes and the greater the deception the more systematized it becomes. It is no wonder that as we near the end of all things, a global government is emerging that by all appearances will make Hitler and Stalin look like choir boys. Phrases like global sustainability, global economy, and global warming are driven into our heads by the controlled media.

Carnal men take the dynamics of the Spirit and make a static, systematic organization out of it. What starts out as a dynamic life force becomes a hollow form of godliness. This sham displaces the power of God to bring about a true inward change in the individual, the only starting place. You cannot force men to make moral decisions by writ of law. It is in our Adamic nature to systematize legal structures so that we can cast off the restraint of the Spirit of God! David wrote, "But you have cast off and abhorred, you have been angry with your anointed. You have made void the covenant of your servant: you have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground" (Psalms 89:38-39 KJ2000). Hosea wrote, "Israel has cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him. They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols that they may be cut off" (Hosea 8:3-4 KJ2000). This is why the living word of God is constantly cutting away the soulless counterfeit life that seeks to replace the true life of the Spirit.

Which will it be--the soulish counterfeit or the true life of the Spirit? One will displace the other.

### ***The Underlying Misconception***

The foundational misconception behind all systemic deception is the idea that order brings life. We see this lived out all around us in religious circles today. You can hear it in virtually every sermon. If you do the right things passionately enough and long enough God will see your faithfulness and bless you. Everything is about achieving the proper God-pleasing form—building according to the pattern, yet they reject the one Pattern that the Father has set before us. Jesus is the Pattern! Order does not bring life. Divine life brings God-pleasing form and functionality that is consistent with His nature.

John put it this way, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4 RSV). The life is in Him and that Life is the only Light that men can accurately see by! Out of Life comes light. He has been made unto us wisdom (1 Corinthians 1: 29). True wisdom and knowledge flows, moment by moment, from divine life. There is no other source for it. All so-called "wisdom" that does not proceed from the Father of light is not light but is artificial, earthly, sensual and ultimately, devilish (see James 3:13-15).

Source determines everything. If the source is the souls of men the best you can have is a poor counterfeit of the Real. "Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush" (Luke 6:44 NRSV). Or as Gerhard Kittel succinctly put it, "Life stands always under the question of its origin and goal."

### ***The Soulsh Counterfeit***

The Pharisees give us a clear example of the cause and effect of the soulsh counterfeit.

Under the old dispensation the law was binding but it was not binding enough to suit the Pharisees. No. They set themselves to give the demands of the law an even greater structure and definition as it applied to the daily life of Israel. At the heart of this effort was the twofold lust to distinguish themselves and control the people in the name of God. Soon they had written volumes of commentaries that they placed on the shoulders of the people—heavy burdens that they refused to remove—systematized error. What was the end of this error? Error always results in one thing—shutting up

the kingdom of heaven against men. Jesus addressed this deception head on. "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in" (Matthew 23:13 RSV).

What this deception amounts to is simply the replacing of one order with another—the replacing of divine order (the rule of God) with human order—the true life and leading of the Spirit vs. the soulish counterfeit enforced by men. Human order always has the affect of shutting people away from God's rule through intermediary interference. Though the Bible has much to say about the necessity of living by and walking in the Spirit, these self-appointed mediators will not permit something so haphazard to occur on their watch. They are not going into God's kingdom and neither is anyone else! Though they speak of God and His kingdom in glowing terms they are the enemies of the direct rule of God.

Everything that man does in the name of religion is diabolically designed to supplant the order of God's Spirit, to replace the order of life with another system, order and head. In this carnal order all things are held together organizationally, by ecclesiastical heads in a diocese system governed by a religious hierarchy. Judaism and Islam have their own counterparts as well and are equally as hateful in their orthodox form to all who do not believe as they do. The wars that are being waged on the earth today are powered by systematized deception. The very definition of the word religion—to rebind—is what drives these religious sects.

The early church lived by a different order altogether. In God's order Paul wrote, "And he [Jesus] is before all things, and by him all things are held together (Colossians 1:15-17 KJ2000). The whole universe is held or bound together by Jesus alone, not men. Carnal men seek to rebind them to another, the master of systematized deception.

### ***God's Respect for the Human Will***

At the heart of God's order is a respect for the human will. God does not impose or force his will upon anyone. The height of the human will is willingness, not reluctance, not begrudging-ness but a voluntary response to His love. Through sharing His perspective and communicating His passion by His Spirit, He seeks to bring believers into His viewpoint until both wills become one. "Come now let us reason together says

the Lord." In short, He works in us both to will and do of His good pleasure and when His work in us is finished, His good pleasure is our good pleasure. The order of God is based on union ("Emanuel - God with us") and revelation, not a mindless objective obedience. We will know if we press on to know the Lord (see Hosea 6:3). In other words, if we know the Lord, we know all we need to know. Truly the gospel of the New Testament is God introducing Himself through His Son. It is through contact with Him that we learn Him and come to know our Father in a greater and living way. As we are in union with Him we are taught by Him. Anything else is deception because it leads people to think that they have a relationship with God when they do not. They have a purely platonic understanding of God—not founded in reality. So much of what goes on in the name of preaching and teaching is nothing more than theorizing what God is like and what His will is. Instead it should be encouraging people to seek our Father with all their hearts. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Our Father," not "Great God in heaven." All through the gospels the orthodox Jews used the phrases "our father David, our father Abraham, our father Jacob," but in their deception they could not conceive of the God of the universe as their Father. And because Jesus referred to God as His Father they wanted to kill Him.

The order of the *kosmos* (the rudimentary principles of the world) is designed to manipulate and bypass human volition. Though God holds the human will in the highest regard, man does not. In man's mind the bottom line is always the chief consideration. Therefore the end justifies the means. He wants results and so tends to despise what God values, running rough shod over the wills of his fellow men.

The point we want to make here is simply this, methodology and systematizing are not "next to godliness" but rather man's soulish substitutes for life and growth—growing up into Him. We say substitutes because methodology and Divine Life are intrinsically opposed to one another because of their entirely different origins and births. You cannot mix the two. The former is of the world and is controlled by its mode of government--the rudimentary principles of this world. The latter is of a heavenly origin and is exclusively born and guided from heaven through God's Spirit. We see this dependency upon the Spirit lived out by the early Church in the Book of Acts. Before long, though, they began to leave the divine order and turn again to the rudimentary principles of the world. Remember the Greek word for world is *kosmos* which means a system. Paul addressed this carnal tendency to leave the divine order and return to the governing principles of the world in virtually every one of his letters. He asked the

foolish Galatians, "Who has bewitched you. . . Having begun in the Spirit, are you now completed in the flesh?" (See Galatians 3). These foolish Galatians were trading life for systematized error, the overtly rigid order of the Judaizers.

We get an even clearer perspective from Paul's warning to the Colossians. Please note the contrast.

"Let no one rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding firmly to the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and ligaments, grows with God's growth. If you died with Christ from the elements of the world, [*kosmos* – system] why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances, (21) "Don't handle, nor taste, nor touch" (all of which perish with use), according to the precepts and doctrines of men? Which things indeed appear like wisdom in self-imposed worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but aren't of any value against the indulgence of the flesh."  
(Colossians 2:18-23 WEB)

The general direction of error is always toward rigidity, captivity, tyranny and loss. It is diabolically designed to keep you from something—to shut up the kingdom of God from you. Hence Paul's exhortation, "Let no one rob you of your prize." He goes on to say what the prize is and the method that the thief (Satan) uses to rob believers of that it. The prize is Christ and involvement in His Body. His Body is divinely knit together and as a result, grows with God's growth. What does the prince of this world use to rob believers? He tries to separate us from divine life by subjugating us to ordinances and in doing so he entices us onto earthly, unholy ground controlled by men in league with Satan. He deceives us into living by our soul-life (*psuchikos*) and attempting to finish what God has started in us by means of the flesh.

How is this deceptive order promoted? What is the mechanism for its advancement? Error organizes and it does so by teaching. It is "according to the precepts and doctrines of men."

As with the Galatians, the errors taught among the Colossians did not promote loose living. On the contrary, it called for greater holiness of life, abstinence, separation from the unclean thing, "Don't handle, nor taste, nor touch." On the surface, this certainly looks like wisdom, but the wise recognize that it is antagonistic to God's growth. God's

growth is of an entirely different order. Though these legalistic teachings attempt to restrain the body and its carnal cravings, this self-imposed order strengthens the flesh.

In the nineteenth century, Andrew Murray understood this, unlike thousands of Bible teachers since him. He wrote in his Book, "The Two Covenants":

The two great lessons God would teach us by it [the Old and New Covenants] are very simple. The one is the lesson of SIN, the other the lesson of HOLINESS. The Old Covenant attains its object only as it brings men to a sense of their utter sinfulness and their hopeless impotence to deliver themselves. As long as they have not learnt this, no offer of the New Covenant life can lay hold of them. As long as an intense longing for deliverance from sinning has not been wrought, they will naturally fall back into the power of the law and the flesh. The holiness which the New Covenant offers will rather terrify than attract them; the life in the spirit of bondage appears to make more allowance for sin, because obedience is declared to be impossible.

The other is the lesson of Holiness. In the New Covenant the Triune God engages to do all. He undertakes to give and keep the new heart, to give His own Spirit in it, to give the will and the power to obey and do His will. As the one demand of the first Covenant was the sense of sin, the one great demand of the New is faith that that need, created by the discipline of God's law, will be met in a Divine and supernatural way. The law cannot work out its purpose, except as it brings a man to lie guilty and helpless before the holiness of God. There the New finds him, and reveals that same God, in His grace accepting him and making him partaker of His holiness.

It is winds of doctrine and adherence to the Old Covenant that keep Abba's Children from growing up into Him. It is teaching that tosses them to and fro. It is teaching that carries them about here and there, prohibiting them from taking root and maturing. It is teaching—this one saying this and another saying that—that keeps believers confused, uncertain and dependent upon teachers—"ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." Though the teachings may contain some objective truths, they yet leave the hearer dependent on teaching and the teacher rather than the Wind of God's Spirit.

Often believers are not pointed to reality but to theory, ideas, principles, and techniques that strangely never leave the realm of supposition. Being dependent on teachers, believers never get enough teaching. Beware when teaching becomes an end

unto itself. Then what is incorrectly taught is no longer the problem. The real problem is that believers are subdued by the process of endless teachings that replace the voice of the Spirit in their lives. At such time, teaching itself becomes the wind that blows against the mast. Remember, apostate people "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:3 KJV).

On the other hand, truth is ordered by an entirely different principle—life and growth. Growing up into Him is not helped along by winds of doctrine. How many contradictory sermons must we sit through before we get this point? Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, who now leads all who will follow Him into all truth—spiritual reality. Anything less than this is simply organization begging for life. Remember, according to Paul, another indicator of apostasy is powerless form (morphōsis - outward semblance, as distinguished from the essential reality – Vincent). "...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:5 NKJV)

So what is our safeguard against such a well-ordered and seemingly legitimate deception? We must learn to distinguish the outward semblance from the essential reality.

"You cannot make something to carry the testimony of the Lord. You cannot make people carry the testimony of the Lord. You cannot gather them into Bible institutions and make them vessels of testimony. Only God can make spiritual men and women, living men and women, men wrought for this purpose. We must take our hands off one another, and leave them to the Lord. If it were something else we could get together and take counsel together, and we could arrange a scheme, an enterprise, and get beautifully organized, and launch it, and carry it on; but that is like a Philistine cart, and in the testimony of Jesus that cannot be done with the guarantee that God will sponsor it and take responsibility for it. God must constitute us a vessel on the basis of life and knowledge of Himself, and no man can do that, no man can make that sort of thing, only God.

So we stand back from one another and let the Lord do it. Much as we would like to help we can do very little; we have to let the Lord do it, and make men and make women, and when the Lord has made them there is the power of the Name. You cannot fit men to bear the Name, only God can fit men for that. It is a matter of the testimony of the Name in mighty energy and power being borne by men and women who are alive



unto the Lord, and in intelligent fellowship with Him. Anything other is bound to break down, to go wrong, and what is more to come under the judgment of God sooner or later."

### ***Addressing the Default Argument***

Some might ask, "Didn't Paul write, 'Let all things be done decently and in order' (1 Corinthians 14:40)? Doesn't this mean that we should order our gathering? And that if there's going to be order there must be a director?"

Yes, Paul did write that, and yes, there is a Director. Paul wrote this qualifying statement right after he informed the Corinthian believers who that Director is. Divine order comes directly from God by His Spirit. Divine order is in the Spirit. Therefore Paul references, "speaking by the Spirit of God...diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...there are diversities of workings, but it is the same God who works all in all...the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man...given by the Spirit...by the same Spirit...by the same Spirit...in all these works that one and same Spirit, dividing to every man individually as he will...by one Spirit...drink into one Spirit...God set the members every one of them in the body...God has arranged the body." We could site many more such references. There's the order! Without this order any attempt to organize in the name of Christ is error and because it is thought to be right and true, it is deception. This is an either/or situation. There is no solution in compromise. To compromise is to settle for lukewarm mediocrity. Or to borrow the words of Michael McDonald in his hit song, *No More Prayin'*:

"We are lost between faith and hope  
Between heart and mind, between love and pride."

So which will it be, truth or outward semblance, as distinguished from the essential reality? Growing into the fullness of the stature of Christ, or being tossed to and fro by the teachings of men? Following the Wind of God's Spirit or being blown about by every wind of doctrine? Will we return to the order that flows from divine life or continue to scheme, enterprise and get beautifully organized? Will we be taught of God as was prophesied by the prophets of old or will we continue to deceive ourselves and heap up teachers?

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:33-34 KJ2000)

Let no one rob you of your prize!

This article is part of The Kingdom or the *Kosmos* and is available in book form. Please see our [Books In Print](#) page.

[Copyright](#) © aWildernessVoice.com