

## Deceiving the Very Elect

By Michael Clark

You see it is in harboring deception in our hearts by our unwillingness to believe that we could be wrong, or by thinking that we have everything in these end times figured out, or that we cannot sin, that we are made a perfect candidate for the wicked one to set up his throne in our hearts.

There is a line of reasoning that the enemy has sown among Christians that it is NOT possible to deceive the elect. Jesus forewarned:

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. (Matthew 24:24-25, NKJV).

These teachers would reason that the elect can't be deceived because they are the elect! This is what is called circular logic. No, not all the elect will be lost, but many of them will be deceived as Satan is let loose to do His evil in this hour we are in.

Paul warns the Church over and over against being deceived in the epistles as does John. Jesus told the disciples, "Take heed that no one deceives you." (Mark 13:5, NKJV).

Yes, dear ones, if you believe that you can't be deceived, then the enemy has already deceived you! Paul warned of this kind of arrogance when he said:

**Let no one deceive himself.** If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV).

It is in our own self assured arrogance and wisdom that we deceive ourselves. John warned:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8, NKJV).

You see it is in harboring deception in our hearts by our unwillingness to believe that we could be wrong, or by thinking that we have everything in these end times figured out, or that we cannot sin, that we are made a perfect candidate for the wicked one to set up his throne in our hearts.

Tell me this. Where according to the New Testament is the temple of God? In our hearts, right? Paul wrote:

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? **For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."** (2 Corinthians 6:16, NKJV).

Then if the temple of God is in the hearts of all who make up the Church, why are we looking toward Jerusalem and waiting to see the Antichrist sit on a throne in the temple over there? Could there not be a "great falling away" due to the displacing of Christ in the hearts of the believers by the enemy himself? Antichrist not only means "against Christ," but "instead of Christ."

- We displace Jesus with men when we look to them to teach us instead of first seeking our guidance from His Spirit. (John 14:26 & 1 John 2:27)
- We displace Jesus when we harbor sin in our hearts. (Matt. 6:23)
- We displace Jesus when we seek honor from men. (John 5:44)
- We displace Jesus when the things of this world take His place. (Matt. 6:24)
- We displace Jesus when we love our families or people more than Him. (Luke 14:26)

John wrote in one of his letters:

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, **even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us;** but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. (1 John 2:18-19, NKJV).

Yes, they were once part of US!!! Part of you! Part of me! Repentance dislodges them out of our hearts. If we don't repent we will eventually leave the fellowship of true believers and follow this spirit. Some who have this spirit resident in them, take a following when they leave. This is how cults are formed.

What is our safeguard? Jesus said of Himself,

**I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. (John 14:30, NKJV).**

This should be our constant prayer that Jesus would so refine our hearts that we too could stand in THIS holy place where He stood. We, too, should pray that the Prince of this world could come and find nothing in us.

Isn't this the very thing that Paul foretold when he warned of the enemy coming with great "dunamis" power to deceive?

**Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, NKJV).**

He continues:

**The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, NKJV).**

You see it is one thing to sin, but it is another thing to sin and block out the convicting power of God that strives to bring you to repentance. This is known as hardening your heart. If you dare to harbor your sin and continue to "have pleasure in unrighteousness" God will be forced to send you a "strong delusion" that you should continue to believe your lie. This is not a time to be playing games with God and presuming on His grace to keep you while you continue in sin. He is separating the sheep from the goats even now. David prayed:

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. **Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalms 19:12-14, NKJV).

I was deceived for over a year that a particular sin that I was engaged in was really "spiritual." I won't go into details but the enemy is very good at what he does and there were even other Christians that agreed with him. But the one thing I could not do was block out the guilt. I would repent, then fall for this sin again and the guilt came back. I also had been given many words of prophesy and warnings from various folks that what I was doing was NOT spiritual. Finally, the word of the Lord came to me through a brother in such a way, naming the deceiving spirit, that the power of the delusion was broken and I once and for all repented and cut myself off from any further opportunity for this sin. Paul told Timothy, "You are a strong man in Christ. You can handle any temptation." NO!!! He said to Timothy, "Flee those youthful lusts!" If a temptation comes your way, don't play around with it, RUN!

So, dear brothers and sisters, I hope that you can learn from my bad example and the things that I have learned in the process of recovery and not "think more highly of yourselves than you ought to think." This is the first step to deception. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. When He lifts you up you will hardly notice it happening and you will less likely be tempted to leave your humility behind, or trade it for a false humility and more deception.

Heed Daniel's warning and watch out for flattering words, for these spirits seek to captivate and plunder you.

**"Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery;** but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. **And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many** days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. **Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end;** because it is still for the appointed time. (Daniel 11:32-35, NKJV).

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:13, NKJV).

Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8, NKJV).