

INTRODUCTION

“Let no one deceive you.”

When you hear that saying, let your mind go back through six thousand years, to when our race was young, and our common mother, Eve, stood in her innocence in the Garden of Eden. Even with no sin in her flesh, and no sinful world around her, she was susceptible to being deceived. And deceived she was, when the father of all lies came to her in the guise of something beautiful. The tempter told her a lie: that there is something undesirable about being in submission to God; that God has some unloving motives for what He commands us; that what God has commanded need not be obeyed. She believed the lie, and so was deceived, was led astray. Her husband, Adam, from whom we all are descended, and who represented us all, followed her into sin.

Murder; robbery; cancer; heart attack; arthritis; heartbreak; tragedy; suffering; shipwrecks, car wrecks, airplane crashes; miscarriage, abortion, infant mortality, deformity; injury; paralysis; adultery, abandonment, divorce; perjury, slander; despotism, tyranny, revolution, civil war, world war...

All of these evils and all others in the history, the present, and the future of the world, result from our mother being deceived, and our father following her into sin. The evils were not long coming, as even their own son, Cain, committed murder against their other son, Abel, his own brother. And the evils have never ceased---the murdering of one son of Eve by another continues even today. Clearly the corruption of Adam's sin passes to every one of us, and the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to every one of us.

But now the second, greater Adam has come, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He has died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin committed in Adam, and the sin we commit in this life, and to wash us clean from it in His blood. And He did not disobey, as Adam did, but always obeys God the Father perfectly in everything. Now, we sinners who believe in Him are not counted as being guilty in Adam, but as being righteous in Christ through faith.

There is no record of the first Adam saying to his bride, “Let no one deceive you.”

But here, in 1 John chapter 3, the second, greater Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ says to us, His bride, His church, His disciples, “Let no one deceive you.”

TEXT

1 John 3:7-8a Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. (8) He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

BODY

Let no one deceive you. That is, let no one lead you astray.

I. Accept the Apostle's Address To You as Little Children

- A. We all know that little children are susceptible to being deceived and led astray
 - 1. that is one of the saddest aspects of life in this sinful world
 - 2. and has led to some of the most tragic violence, which we shudder even to think about
- B. For those of us who are physically adults instead of children, we do not naturally think of ourselves as children spiritually
- C. But just remember how susceptible our first mother was to deception, even when there was no sin in her flesh and no sin in the world around her
- D. Let us be humble before the Lord, accepting the apostle's evaluation of our state
- E. If you do not accept this address to you as a little child, you can expect to be deceived, to be led astray

II. Note that There Are Those Who Try to Deceive You

- A. Remember from last time that this is all in the context of those who profess to be Christians
 - 1. It is even in the context of those who profess to be Christians and do not hold to any great errors in doctrine
- B. The teaching of the whole bible is that from the time the devil first tempted Eve until the time the Lord Jesus comes back, there will be those who try to deceive you
- C. Reject your own ideas that a person professing Christ must not be trying to deceive you
- D. Among those who profess faith in Christ, and hold to all orthodox beliefs, there are indeed those who try to deceive you

III. Be Sure of the Truth of the Matter As Summarized Here

A. This is a summary

1. of what has been shown in the whole bible
2. of what has been shown in the past few lines, from 1 John 2:29

B. There are two corresponding truths here in this summary

1. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Jesus Christ is righteous
 - a) among all those who *say* they are Christians, only those who walk in obedience to the commands of Christ should be thought of as true Christians
2. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning
 - a) all those who *say* they are Christians, but who walk in disobedience to the commands of Christ, should be thought of as being of the devil rather than of Christ
 - b) note yet another time when the New Testament refers to the first few chapters of Genesis!

IV. Consider Some Practical Realities About This

- A. The sad state of affairs in this sinful world means that inaccurate judgments are possible, even likely
 - 1. there is sin still remaining in the flesh of the most devout disciple of Christ
 - 2. so he is susceptible to
 - a) being misjudged
 - b) misjudging another
- B. But refusing to make necessary judgments on the grounds that perfectly accurate evaluation is not possible is disobedience to this instruction
- C. Knowing that we cannot see the spiritual state of the heart, we are instructed by our Lord's apostle to make the necessary judgments based on the person's professed beliefs combined with his way of living.
 - 1. you may be a true believer in Jesus Christ, but
 - a) if the church has need to make a judgment about that, and your conduct is confusing;
 - b) so the church has a very difficult time being sure about you, because your beliefs seem unorthodox or your conduct seems sinful
 - c) then it is to be expected that the church may not consider you a disciples of Jesus Christ, because they have only your conduct to go by
 - 2. there may be an unbeliever, but
 - a) if the church has need to make a judgment about that, and his or her profession of faith is credible, and his or her conduct seems righteous
 - b) then it is to be expected that the church may consider that person a Christian
 - 3. but this is not a fault on the part of the church
 - a) if you use the given criteria
 - b) and you make a sound judgment based on those criteria
 - c) then you have not done wrong if, because of the problems inherent to this sinful state we are in, your judgment is not entirely accurate
 - 4. our Lord Jesus is sure to give us more grace whenever we find ourselves in such a position

- V. Think What It Would Be to Be Deceived About This
- A. You would believe the opposite of what is true
 - 1. You would wrongly think that someone should be considered a Christian, a disciple of Christ, who does not obey Christ
 - 2. You would deny that someone who disobeys Christ should be considered to be of the devil
 - B. You would do the opposite of what is right
 - 1. you would accept and keep someone as a fellow church member who professes faith in Jesus, but does not obey him, who destroys his profession by unholiness of conversation
 - 2. you would approve someone to be a pastor or deacon in the church who does not obey the Lord
 - 3. you would get married to someone who says he is a Christian, but does not obey Christ
 - 4. you would remove from a church made up mostly of those who obey Christ, to find a group made up mostly of those who do not obey Christ
 - C. You would then suffer all the consequences of such decisions
 - D. In the words of Psalm 1
 - 1. you shall be like the chaff which the wind blows away
 - 2. you shall perish

- VI. What You Can Expect, Who Receive this Instruction in Faith and Obedience
- A. If you let no one deceive you, you will not be deceived and led astray
 - 1. nor your wife or husband
 - 2. nor your children or grandchildren
 - 3. nor your church
 - B. In the words of Psalm 1: you shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water
 - 1. you shall bring forth fruit in season
 - 2. your leaf shall not wither
 - 3. whatever you do shall prosper (spiritually)
 - C. In the words of the Ten Commandments: God shall show mercy to thousands of generations, to those who love Him and keep His commandments
 - D. In the words of John, in this letter
 - 1. 1 John 1:4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.
 - 2. 1 John 2:3 by this we know that we know Him
 - 3. 1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
 - 4. 1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
 - 5. 1 John 5:13 you may know that you have eternal life

CONCLUSION

Little children, let no one deceive you:

-He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Jesus Christ is righteous.

-He who practices sin is of the devil, just as the devil has sinned from the beginning.

7a Little children, let no one deceive you.

JRY:

If you think someone might be deceiving you, do not just ignore it or think it couldn't be.

What would it be not to follow this instruction, but to let someone deceive you?

----- this material important, but already used last week-----

This discussion is of those who:

1 John 1:6 say they have fellowship with Him

1 John 2:4 say they know Him

1 John 2:6 say they abide in Him

1 John 2:9 say they are in the light

to summarize, they profess to be Christians

Among those who profess to be Christians, some are the children of God and some are the children of the devil.

Furthermore, beginning 1 John 2:29 and continuing through the end of chapter 3, the apostle is not even talking about those who profess to be Christians, but do not believe the truth about Christ, but instead believe lies. In this section, the apostle is teaching us about how to evaluate the genuineness of those who profess to believe the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Carroll:

The outsider cannot know our inner experiences of faith, hope, love, joy, and peace. He hears our professions, and holds them credible only so far as manifested in the life. Our Lord himself fixed that standard: "A tree is known by its fruits." So, of professed children of God it may be said, "By their fruits shall ye know them." Hence our letter says, "My little children, let no man lead you astray. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that doeth sin is of the devil. . . . Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because

his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever that doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

From these passages it is evident that no man should be fellowshipped as a preacher, or even retained as a church member, who denies the essential deity of Jesus Christ, his incarnation, his vicarious death as a propitiation for sin; nor one whose profession of these doctrines does not bear fruit unto love and holiness.

A mere verbal orthodoxy is hypocrisy, and is more hateful to God and more hurtful to man than avowed infidelity. I am quite sure that a strict application of this test would empty thousands of pulpits, hundreds of professors' chairs in Christian schools, and deplete thousands of church rolls. This emptying and depleting would not be deplorable but helpful. It would amount to a great revival. As they depart from us, we could say with this letter: "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 they all are not of us."

7b He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

8a He who sins is of the devil,

8b for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

8c For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10a In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God . . .

First two hymns make up the prelude....followed by the regular order.

Trinity 704 Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross, F down to Eb Prelude

Camille Piano

Anna Clarinet

Trinity 700 Trust and Obey, F down to Eb Prelude

Camille Piano

Anna Clarinet

Grace 170 -There is No Sin That I Have Done, E Major to D

Camille Piano

Anna Clarinet

Trinity 446 Psalm 1 , E Major to D

Camille Piano

Anna Clarinet

Grace 181 - Unchanging Righteousness, D down to C,

Camille Piano

Anna Clarinet

Trinity 721 Nor Silver nor Gold, D

Anna Piano

Camille Sing

Call to Worship: Psalm 145:17-18

Scripture Reading: John 8:31-51

Sermon: "Let No One Deceive You"

1 John 3:7-8a Benediction: 1 Peter 2:24