Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Avenues of Deceit

(Jerry Fite)

Deceit involves acts of representing as true what is false. Since all deceit is based upon lies, it is a tool used by Satan, the "father of lies" (John 8:44). Let us notice some avenues through which deceit approaches us at the bidding of Satan.

AVENUE OFAPPEARANCE

Paul warns us of false apostles who fashion themselves into apostles of Christ and ministers of righteousness *(2 Corinthians 11:13-15).* In realty they are *"deceitful workers"* whose end shall be *"according to their works."*

They may approach us with a piety that may be expressed in how much they deprive themselves of bodily comforts. They may be severe to the body, but inwardly they are corrupt. Paul warns us that such actions have a *"show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and severity to the body, but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (Colossians 2:23).* In reality, they are fleshly minded though they look like pious humble servants being severe to the body.

Jesus helps us to not be fooled by false appearances. He warns us that false prophets will appear as harmless as sheep. We must constantly look beyond appearances and examine the character of their works *(Matthew 7:15-20).*

AVENUE OF RATIONALIZATON

Satan allows us to rely on our own prideful thinking to deceive ourselves. Paul warns, *"Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise" (I Corinthians 3:18).* Some deceive themselves by thinking they can sow to the flesh and not suffer corruption. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh reap corruption..." (Galatians 6:7-8).* We may pride ourselves as being religious, but we do not control our tongue. *"If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain (James 1:26).*

We must never elevate our "think-so's" above hat God actually reveals on any subject.

AVENUE OF FLATTERY

False teachers use this method to deceive the innocent. They speak *"...great swelling words, showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage" (Jude 16).* They may brag on you as they murmur and complain about those who are truly living according to God's standard. If the hearer is not on guard, he will be caught up in the false teacher's *"smooth and fair speech"* as he beguiles the hearts of the innocent *(Romans 16:18).*

One can arm himself from this approach of deceit by comparing the teacher's teaching with the doctrine of Christ which can be learned *(Romans 16:17, 2 John 9-11).*

AVENUE OF PROPAGANDA

Facts can be twisted in the midst of emotionally charged words which can lead us astray. Assyria's spokesman brought fear to the hearts of Juda, but he twisted the facts about God. He presented facts such as *"the gods not delivering Samaria,"* but the fact which he ignored was Jehovah is not *"a god," but the only God (cf. 2 Kings 18:28-35, 19:7, 35-37).* We must always look at the truth behind any propaganda.