

“ALL TRUTH PASSES THROUGH THREE STAGES. FIRST, IT IS RIDICULED, SECOND IT IS VIOLENTLY OPPOSED, AND THIRD, IT IS ACCEPTED AS SELF-EVIDENT”

Arthur Schopenhauer, Philosopher

“IN A TIME OF UNIVERSAL DECEIT, TELLING THE TRUTH BECOMES A REVOLUTIONARY ACT”

George Orwell, Author

Hatred, is Lawful and Righteous!

Hate and love are opposite emotions. Both, hate and love, in the right way are used to serve God's purpose. Let neither be abused!

Deut. 22:13-17, 18-21 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.” (KJV)

According to verses Deuteronomy 22: 20-21 a man is justified in hating -- without invoking God's wrath -- a promiscuous woman (false virgin). Much more pleasantly with the opposite emotion of love, a man can appreciate the desire of a virtuous and chaste female that would want to be his wife.

Thus, the justified hate or love of a man is determined whether his act is in assimilation of God's law or covenant (New Testament).

Hate then, can be determined as a good emotion for the right purpose. Even as a man should hate the sin of fornication, and the image of the unfaithful woman, he does not sin by hating; rather he merits God's favor.

God deceives men:

Ezek. 14:9 “And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.”

2 Thess. 2:10-12 “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Examining the Context

We need to consider all of chapters 13 and 14 to determine why the prophet is deceived. The heading "Against False Prophets" describes 13: 1-16. The Lord tells Ezekiel to prophesy against the prophets of Israel. They prophesy through illusions, not visions. What they say does not come true. They claim that what they say comes from God when it does not. They deceive the people, who look to them for guidance. God condemns these prophets and will remove them.

The heading "Against Witches" describes 13: 17-23. The Lord tells Ezekiel to prophesy against the women who make up prophecies. These women give wrist charms and head veils to people, then state lies to them. They cause good people to die and evil people to live through their power. Their spells have been disastrous for many people. All this has been to provide themselves with a meager living. God will destroy their power and rescue His people.

The heading "Against Those Who Cherish Idols" describes 14: 1-11. Some leaders of the people come to Ezekiel. The Lord speaks to Ezekiel in regard to them. Everyone who cherishes his idols sets up the source for sinning. When such a person comes to a prophet, the Lord will tell the prophet to advise the person to repent, turn away from his idols, and eliminate all his abominations. When a person who has turned from the Lord and cherishes his idols comes before the Lord in hypocritical fashion, the Lord will oppose that person, making him an example as He destroys him from among His people. If the prophet allows himself to be deceived into prophesying in this case, without the Lord's counsel, the Lord will not prevent the deception from happening. The prophet has caused his own downfall through his own sin and will be destroyed by the Lord. The hypocritical person who has come to the prophet will also be destroyed. These actions will be taken to protect God's people from wandering away from Him.

The heading "Noah, Daniel, and Job Could Save Only Themselves" describes 14: 12-23. If a country sins exceedingly against God, He will punish it through such disasters as famine, ferocious animals, war, or plague. Even such righteous men as Noah, Daniel, and Job would be unable to save anyone but themselves. However, God will spare a few people so that it will be known what has happened.

Deception means delusion, falsehood, fraud, hypocrisy, lie, or trickery. God cannot lie (Titus 1: 2; Hebrews 6: 18). Therefore, He does not cause the prophet to be deceived. Satan, or the Devil, deceives the whole world (Revelation 12: 9). Thus, the prophet is deceived by Satan. The two chapters give warning to the children of Israel against the deception of false prophets, witches, and idols. If the people allow themselves to be deceived and do not repent and turn away from

their sins, not only the deceivers, but also they themselves will be destroyed. When Ezekiel 14: 9 is put into its proper context, one can see that God will deceive no one, but will punish those who deceive others or who allow themselves to be deceived. He will allow deception to take place when people choose to turn away from Him. Some translators appear to have been lax in translating or in not having included a footnote to avoid a wrong understanding by the reader.

Application for Us Today

Although God gave these prophecies through Ezekiel, there are applications to Christians and non-Christians today. All of us are aware that there is deception everywhere around us. Sometimes, we may not pinpoint it until we fall victim to it. Often, there is deception when we blindly accept what we believe is truth.

False prophets are those church leaders, at any level, who elevate themselves or allow themselves to be elevated and mislead their followers. Some of them do it for personal financial gain. Some of them do it out of pride. Some accept the traditions of their religion without carefully examining the Scriptures and seeking God's will. Some commit other sins which will lead eventually to their downfall. They are in a position of spiritual leadership and must set the proper example, including seeking forgiveness when they have done wrong. A true leader with the Spirit of God working in him will not mislead his followers. He will recognize his strengths and weaknesses. He will keep in constant contact with God in order to follow His will. False prophets are motivated by Satan.

Witches are more prevalent than one may suppose. They will not be seen in black outfits and riding on broomsticks. Be wary of persons conducting seances, casting spells, or working with the occult in any form. Persons doing such things as magic, fortune-telling, tea-leaf reading, tarot card reading, meditation, and healing through chants and superstition are practising witchcraft. Such are condemned by God. They receive their power from Satan.

We usually look to religions other than our own, particularly those that are non-Christian, when we think of idols. You may be surprised to learn that idols may exist in your church or your home. Any object which is revered for religious reasons by you or by any Christian or non-Christian organization is an idol. Be wary of souvenirs. Our family was surprised with how many we found in our home that we innocently purchased or accepted as gifts. Besides this prophecy by Ezekiel, the warning is very clear in the Ten Commandments.

We cannot have idols, practise idolatry, and associate with witches and false prophets while trying to serve God. This will not be tolerated by God. We can take the advice that He gave to Ezekiel, that we repent and turn away from our sins. The alternative is the consequences that He told Ezekiel, that we shall be destroyed. May it be known to all that God deceives no one. He speaks only the truth.

Why does God allow deception?

God's desire is that all people repent and be saved (2 Peter 3:9). At the same time, Satan, the "father of lies" (John 8:44), deceives the very people who need to accept the truth. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Surely, God could stop Satan's lies and give people a fighting chance.

The Bible presents a consistent picture of how sin and deception are related. What's revealed is that the way we tend to think of deceit is, well, a bit deceived. Spiritually speaking, deception is deeper than merely being tricked or lied to. In order to be saved, one does not need any particular level of intelligence, philosophical ability, or wisdom (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 1:20, 26). In fact, mankind has an unfortunate habit of using increased knowledge to develop more sophisticated ways to sin.

Key to understanding spiritual deception is the fact that God will not interfere with man's free will, and sometimes that means we'll choose what we want to believe rather than what we should believe, even in the face of the evidence (Luke 16:31). "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John 12:37). Notice that they would not believe Jesus, despite the miracles. Their unbelief was willful.

Eve is the earliest, clearest example of how spiritual deception really works. When the serpent asks her, "Did God really say..." Eve responds by quoting what God had said (Genesis 3:1-3). She knows what to do and what not to do. The serpent then tempts her with what she can gain by eating from the tree (Genesis 3:4-5), and she notices other attractive aspects of the fruit (Genesis 3:6). Eve was lied to, and the serpent was cunning (2 Corinthians 11:3), but she ultimately chose to disobey God, even though she could quote the commandment.

When confronted with her sin, Eve said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13b). The original Hebrew word for "deceived" implies trickery and craftiness; it is sometimes translated "seduced." Seduction is an appropriate way to think of the deception of Eve—she knew full well what God had said, but she chose to disobey because she wanted something that the serpent cleverly offered.

The same dynamic is at work today. Everyone who rejects God does so because, in some way, he doesn't really want to obey Him. We are tempted by our "own evil desire" first (James 1:14). That's not to say that every unbeliever is blatantly and spitefully turning from what he knows is true. But the unbeliever's desire for self-satisfaction makes Satan's deception all the more potent.

God has sent the Savior (John 3:16), He fills the world with signs of Himself (Romans 1:20), He makes Himself available to those who seek Him (Deuteronomy 4:29), and He secures anyone who comes to Him (John 6:37). When men reject what is "clearly seen" of God (Romans 1:20), it leads to a downward spiral of "foolish hearts" made dark (verse 21), idolatry (verse 22), and sexual impurity (verse 24). Finally, mankind "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (verse 25). In other words, the spiritual deception of mankind is the direct result of rejecting truth once held. The unbeliever has made an exchange—the truth for a lie—and the devil is happy to facilitate the swap by presenting the sinner with a wide array of lies from which to choose.

Anyone who resists God risks falling into spiritual deception (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10). Nature abhors a vacuum, and the void created by the eviction of truth will soon be filled by something less than true. Give up the truth, and you'll believe just about anything.

Eve didn't sin because she was hopelessly outmatched by a demonic force, making her do wrong when she thought she was doing right. Yes, she was lied to, but she chose to listen to the lie. That was followed by her longing look at what was forbidden and, finally, her taking the fruit in hopes of a better life.

All human sin is based in human choice (1 Corinthians 10:13). When we reject the truth, we make ourselves vulnerable to the lie. Repeated rejection of spiritual truth brings spiritual deception as a divine consequence.

God allows spiritual deception as a form of punishment for willful sin, and in order to cultivate an awareness in our lives of how badly we need the One who is Himself Truth, our Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6)