

# Understanding Deception

---

Deception means to lead another into error, danger, or into a disadvantaged position through underhand means for example, the deliberate misrepresentation of the truth.

## The source of deception

Satan is the source of all deception. He seeks worship. This puts Satan totally at odds with the God of truth. To attract mankind to worship him Satan seeks to direct people away from the truth into a false reality. Jesus referred to Satan as the '*father of lies*' in

**John 8:44,**

*'...you are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources for he is a liar and the father of it.'*

## The characteristics of deception

The first examples of the characteristics of deception are found in **Genesis 2 and 3**.

1. Satan is highly intelligent at setting traps.

**Genesis 3:1**

*'Now the serpent was more **CUNNING** than any beast of the field that God had made'.*

2. He deceives by diverting our attention from the truth.

God had told Adam and Eve in **Genesis 2:16** that they could eat of every tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan said '*Has God indeed said, 'you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'*' God told them that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that they will die. Satan said '*you will not die*'. In this way Satan diverts them from the truth to trap his prey.

3. He disguises his motives.

**Genesis 2:17**

*God said, 'but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'*

**Genesis 3:4**

*'Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'*

Satan pretends to have Adam and Eve's best interests at heart but in fact the opposite is true. He knows that God had pronounced judgement upon Adam and Eve if they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So he entices them into a position where they will be negatively judged.

The next verse from the New Testament compares the motivation of Satan (described as a thief) to Jesus.

# Understanding Deception

---

## **John 10:10**

*'The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.'*

4. Satan promotes false need.

## **Genesis 3:6**

*'So when the woman saw that the tree was GOOD for food, that it was PLEASANT to the eyes, and a tree DESIREABLE to make ONE wise she took of its fruit and ate.'*

Satan enticed Eve to eat of the tree under the illusion that it would enhance her life. What she imagines about the tree is a false reality.

## **Protection from Deception**

We are protected from deception when we seek to understand the word of truth and then to test everything by what we have understood to be true.

## **Understanding the truth**

### **John 8:31-32**

*'Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'*

This verse outlines the principle clearly. To abide means to remain or continue in. Here Jesus says if you continue to live your lives according to his words you will be set free from unreality. Deception is unreality.

### **Hebrews 5:13-14**

*'For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'*

In the above verse the writer is using the analogy of human growth. Milk is good for a baby but there comes a time when solid food is needed for healthy growth; so it is with the word of God. Growing in faith will require ongoing study and practise. Through this we develop the necessary tools to discern what is good (truth) and what is evil (deception).

## **Testing all things**

### **1 John 4:1**

*'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.'*

### **1 Thessalonians 5:21**

*'Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.'*

In order to test something you need the truth as a measure to make the comparison. This cannot be done without a good understanding of the word of God.

# Understanding Deception

---

## The Extent of Deception

Deception is global in its impact affecting all of mankind. This next passage outlines a time in history when the peoples of the earth were united together in speech and geography. However their unity was based on their rejection of God. As a result, God confuses their speech and they are scattered across the earth. From these scattered groups, the modern day people groups were formed.

### Genesis 11:1-8

*'Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, "Come let us make bricks and back them thoroughly." They had brick for stone and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city; and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built and the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.'*

From the above passage we can outline the orientation of their thinking.

Come – we will make bricks  
Come – we will build a city  
Come - we will build a tower to the heavens  
Come – we will make a name for ourselves

In short – Let us create our own future through our own ability to develop. We can make our own spiritual connections to help us and determine our own destiny.

From the following verse in the New Testament the apostle John outlines the situation as follows.

### 1 John 5:19

*'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.'*

## The Devil and his deceptions come to an end

The good news is that the devil and his deceptions do not last. Just before the establishment of the New Earth and Heavens, Jesus casts the devil into his place of punishment for all the destruction he has purposefully brought upon humanity. This next verse in from the last book of Revelation outlines this.

**Revelation 20:10** *'The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.'*