

The Root of Deception in the American Church

It is the betrayal of the wisdom and power of God, and stands in direct contradiction to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to Christianity. It's been around for thousands of years, before creation as a matter of fact. It was born from rebellion in the heart of Lucifer before the creation of man, and in the same way it deceived Eve, it is at the root of all deception. It's humanism.

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: '**I will** ascend into heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God; **I will** also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds, **I will** be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?'" (Is. 14:12-17)

Lucifer asserted his own will above God's will. He deified himself to be as God. Then after his fall from heaven he subtly disseminated his humanistic philosophy, the ascension and exaltation of self, into Eve's ears.

"The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "**Has God indeed said**, 'you shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall

not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die?'" 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" (Gen. 3:1-5).

Notice how Lucifer, now Satan, deceived Eve. He made her doubt the Word of God by making these three core statements:

"Has God really said not to eat of every tree of the garden?"

"You will not surely die."

"You will be like God."

Therein those three statements lay the deification of man.

First, Eve began to doubt the absolute authority of the Word of God. Unless the Bible becomes the basis and authority of our total belief system we will give place to lies, heresies and doctrines of demons. Satan asked Eve a question that amounted to: "Did God really mean what He said?" That subtle questioning of God's Word then turned into a bold contradiction of it: "You will not surely die." And finally, it ended with a false promise: "You will be like God."

It was when Adam and Eve acted on Satan's subtle suggestion that sin was birthed. Then with sin came sickness, disease, poverty, hatred, strife, suffering and death. It all began in Lucifer's heart, and then was injected into God's first creation, before being passed on throughout every generation.

We need to understand the spirit or the heart of man. In the center of every human heart there is a throne. This throne is always occupied by either of two aspirants: God or self. When God is enthroned by the human heart and will, then man is positioned correctly under God's authority. When self is enthroned then God becomes dethroned, and man lives independently of God and becomes his own master, a god unto himself. He establishes the standards of his own happiness and

interprets them. This is the deification of man, and it is what Satan offered Eve and what he offers every human being. The Bible correctly calls this self-enthronement godlessness (Rom 1).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is one of self-denial.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Self-denial is the giving up and surrender of every part of you to God. The real gospel brings man under the total possession of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man has a natural aversion to denying himself, and any gospel that caters to this aversion is another gospel.

Let's look at the account of the rich young ruler and see a demonstration of this aspect of the gospel.

"Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Do not defraud," "Honor your father and your mother." ' And he answered and said to Him, 'Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.' Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.' But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Mark 10:17-22).

This young man was not a casual seeker like so many are today, but was very earnest and sincere. He *ran* to Jesus and *knelt* before Him to inquire of how to obtain this great salvation. Did you notice that when Jesus quoted the Ten Commandments He

purposely left out four of them? The commandments He quoted all had to do with the man's relationship to other people, while the four He omitted were in respect to his relationship to God. According to Jesus, that is where this man fell short. That is also the reason Jesus did not acknowledge the "Good Teacher" greeting, but instead pointed the man to God. In other words, Jesus is saying to the rich man, "Since you don't believe I am God why do you call me good? Only God is good." This rich man needed to be made aware that it was his relationship to God that lacked. His love for riches stood between him and God. In fact, his wealth had become his god. Self was on the throne.

The way to be delivered and set free from the greed and covetousness that was in this man's heart was for him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor. Then in doing so, he would not only have treasure in heaven, but he could then take up his cross and follow Jesus. But the rich man just wouldn't do it. He went away sad. The philosophy of humanism is to make man happy, but the gospel can actually make a man sad until he gets off his throne and surrenders.

Jesus let this man walk away. He did not go after him. He did not change, alter, or modify the gospel for this man as is commonly done today. He understood that self and God could not jointly rule in this man's heart. Man cannot serve two masters. It was one or the other. There was no negotiation. Today our modern gospel is so different. We have modified the gospel to suit man's love for sin and self.

This is the root of our deception in the American church today.

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